



Commercial operations under way at the new airport of Santo Domingo

Joaquín Balaguer International Airport, to the north of Santo Domingo, began to operate with commercial aircraft after the authorities closed down Herrera facilities amid the opposition echoed by the airlines. The Dominican President Leonel Fernández ordered the closure of Herrera airport by means of a Decree dated January 26 for all flights coming and going to Puerto Rico, the United States, Haiti, and some other Islands in the Caribbean, including a number of chartered flights. In addition, he ordered the relocation of all operations to Joaquín Balaguer International Airport. The airport was opened two years ago although it had never operated with commercial airlines. The officers from the affected airlines rejected the measure adopted by the Government and told the press the new airport does not meet the requirements for their relocation because its hangars are not ready yet, among other things.

Rise in Quito's charges effective as of March 1

Quiport S.A. Corporation, the concessionaire running Mariscal Sucre Airport in Quito, announced that both Ecuadorian and international airlines operating at the international airport would have to pay an additional 30% for the landside services they provide. The concessionaire stated this measure would become effective on March 1. The International Landing Tax will rise from US \$6.05 to US \$9.16, while for domestic flights, the amount will go from US \$1.13 to US \$1.72.

Brazilian airports reported a 16% rise in passengers' volumes

The number of passengers that use Brazilian airports grew 16.22% in 2005 with respect to the figure for the previous year. Based on the information provided by Infraero, 96.1 million people boarded and landed from Brazilian terminals in 2005, when compared against the 82.7 million people recorded in 2004. According to the company that runs 66 airports in Brazil, the data confirm a new historical record.

Peru: The final airport concession contract will be ready in March

René Cornejo, Executive Director of the company known as Agencia de Promoción de la Inversión Privada (ProInversión), has announced the final version of the concession contract for the first regional airports group is to be ready on March 3. "The concession process comprises nine airports and, right now, it does not include the airports of Pisco (Ica region), Chiclayo (Lambayeque) or Piura. Nevertheless, the contract will contain provisions and clauses for their subsequent inclusion into the process once they get the approval from the Ministry of Defense," he stated. Moreover, Cornejo added they expect to receive an answer before March, once the final version of the contract is submitted and offers from the interested bidders are received.

Colombia adjusts its airport charges

The Colombian Civil Aviation Authority has adjusted airport charges that passengers have to pay again. According to the resolution, passengers boarding public air transportation



companies at the airports of Bogotá (Eldorado), Bucaramanga, Cúcuta, Río negro, San Andrés, Santa Marta, Arauca, Armenia, Barrancabermeja, Yopal, Florencia, Ibagué, Ipiales, Leticia, Montería, Neiva, Pasto, Popayán, Quibdó, Riohacha, Tumaco, Valledupar, and Villavicencio, will have to pay USD \$4.22 instead of USD \$4.04. The corresponding amount for the international airport charge all passengers flying overseas will have to pay will rise from USD \$30 to USD \$31. In addition, the Civil Aviation Authority determined that every air carrier using bridges at the international terminals of the airports run by the entity will have to pay a uniform charge of US \$92 for this service.

Guarulhos expects 270 thousand passengers for the Carnival season

Sao Paulo airport expects to receive approximately 270 thousand people between February 24 and March 1 for the carnival season. This figure would represent a 12.5% rise when compared against the figure for the previous year. As stated by Infraero, 260 check-in counters from 40 airlines will be available, and 44 different aircraft models will operate at the airports. This stands for an average of nearly 400 operations a day, with flights to any of the 75 cities it connects.

Cancun airport is slowly recovering

The number of flights at Cancun International Airport is bouncing back after the remarkable drop experienced since October following the wreck left by Hurricane Wilma. So far this month, landings and takeoffs together have reached nearly 230 daily operations, mostly to and from other countries, and generally to and from North America and Europe. The operations within the country connected mainly Toluca, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, and León.

New airport in Samaná, Dominican Republic

The Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic, together with Aeropuertos Dominicanos Siglo XXI (Aerodom), have announced their new airport, El Catey International Airport in Samaná, will be operational in November. The new terminal will demand an investment of USD \$70 million. In addition, the project includes a building for passengers' arrivals and departures with a built area of 90 thousand square meters, and capacity to accommodate large aircraft.

Emergency system opened at Ezeiza

The Argentine President Néstor Kirchner formally opened a new sector at the international Terminal of Ezeiza Airport to house an emergency system for the domestic sector. The Minister of Federal Planning Julio De Vido, the Secretary of Transport Ricardo Jaime, executives from Aeropuertos Argentina 2000 –the concessionaire– and the city Mayor Alejandro Granados were also present for this event. The system comprises thirty high-complexity ambulances, which can promptly go to the area of a disaster in the event of an air accident. The initiative demanded an investment of 1.5 million dollars. Out of the total number of ambulances, five will stay in the air terminal, five will provide services to Ezeiza



Hospital, and the remaining twenty ambulances will be serving the different health centers from the surroundings, with a response time of less than five minutes if the airport needs them there. In addition, the health system provided with this project will be also available to the 180 thousand inhabitants living in Ezeiza District.

The construction of an airport in Honduras is challenged

The Department of Environment of Honduras (PGA) will challenge the environmental license granted for the construction of an airport in Piedras Amarrillas, Copan, as it believes it would go against the remains of the “maya” culture in Copan Ruins Archaeological Park. The legal action will be filed by René Zúñiga, the Department Head, who has founded such determination on a study conducted by a group of experts. Such study warns against the danger an airport would pose for the area, which has been declared World Heritage in 1980 by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science, and Culture (UNESCO). The project wants to build the runway in Río Amarillo area, some 17 kilometers from Copan archaeological park, with a cost of nine million dollars obtained from international cooperation. The Department's challenge against the construction of the runway is not isolated. Last year, UNESCO urged reconsidering the closure of the air terminal in Río Blanco and its relocation in La Entrada area, which is 70 kilometers from the park.

ILS operations controlled at Rio Grande Airport in Tierra del Fuego

With the arrival of an aircraft provided with the necessary equipment to conduct a control of the so-called ILS systems (Instrument Landing System), an exhaustive check will be performed at Rio Grande International Airport in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. According to Vice-Brigadier General Héctor Biasutti, the airport head, “this procedure will officially certify the functioning of this complex equipment is in excellent operating conditions and ensures air safety.” This surveillance is conducted in accordance with a predefined schedule that certifies the correct functioning, and more specifically the correct functioning of the new remote control system that has been implemented three months ago, to ensure normal operations.

Breathtaking airport opened in Kobe, Japan

After an earthquake destroyed the airport in 1995, the authorities from Kobe formally opened the new airport in this city from the Southwest of Japan. The project was developed despite the concerns about the financial feasibility for these modern premises. The airport complex officially started operations when Japan Airlines (JAL) flight 1342 took off with 453 passengers on board a Boeing 777-300. The construction of the airport began in 1999, four years after the Grand Hanshin Earthquake ravaged the city along the Southwestern coast of Japan claiming up 6,600 lives and causing massive destruction in the foundations of the city. The total construction cost for the project has amounted to 2.683 billion dollars. Criticism also spread against the construction of this airport,



particularly because of its short distance with other two major terminals, namely: Osaka-Itami terminal for domestic flights and Kansai terminal for international flights.

Reopening of Sauce Viejo Airport

Santa Fe Governor Jorge Obeid has announced the repair and modeling project for Sauce Viejo Airport will be formally launched on April 22. The announcement was made after receiving complaints from local businessmen. They stressed “the project was to be completed in 7 months, although nearly three years have elapsed and the project is still incomplete because of the exacerbating sluggishness in performing the tasks.” According to the letter sent to the governor, apart from the problems in the terminal building, the runway is deteriorated. In addition, the runway is too narrow to accommodate the newest airplanes, there is no beaconing or safety system, and the water sanitation works have not been completed yet. Moreover, these businessmen urge the settlement of Customs and Immigration control posts for international flights.

Tijuana Airport has its own “Walk of Fame”

The Economic Development Board and the Image Committee of Tijuana installed a series of images of the most representative local figures along the corridors of the international airport, which is known as the Walk of Fame. José Galicot Béhar, representative of the Image Committee of Tijuana, said this is an area showing images of figures who have excelled in different areas and who have given the city its reputation. They will become the hosts for all the people that come to “Abelardo L. Rodríguez” international airport every day.

Celebrations for Boeing 737 Number 5000

Boeing celebrated the delivery of its unit 5000 for model 737 to Southwest Airlines, the American Company, with an event held in its Renton Headquarters in Chicago. The aircraft is included in the Guinness record as the commercial airplane with the highest production and sales figures recorded in the history of aviation. Boeing's spokesperson highlighted that “with more than 4100 airplanes in service, the 737 represent more than one fourth of the total fleet of large commercial aircraft currently flying the skies. More than 541 air carriers fly 737 airplanes connecting more than 1200 cities scattered in 190 countries. According to the estimates, about 1250 of these airplanes are flying at a given time, taking off or landing every 4.6 seconds.”

The problems in the wing of the A380 do not affect delivery date

Airbus confirmed that, despite the failure detected in one wing during the strength test, the delivery schedules for the A380 will not be affected, and will be completed as scheduled, as stated by the business head of the aircraft construction company John Leahy. “We do expect and foresee this problem is relatively minor”, he pointed out during a press conference organized before the opening of an aerospace exhibition in Singapore. Before issuing the certificate authorizing an airplane to provide commercial services, the aviation



authorities establish its "load limits," i.e., the maximum stress each aircraft part can resist in situations of extreme turbulences or forced landings. The requirement for the new aircraft is a load strength of more than 1.5 times the limit. One wing of the A380 had a breakage before expected during the ground-based testing phase conducted in Toulouse last Tuesday, yielding at 1.45 times the limit. Nevertheless, Leahy stressed there would be no big change in the airplane design. "We have enough data from the tests to know what we have to do. This should not affect the airplane delivery," he said.

Fare rises and changes in the Aviation Code

According to La Nación Newspaper, the single newspaper addressing the subject, the word is that the Argentine Secretariat of Transport is analyzing a 20% rise in the fare ranges ruling local airfare prices in Argentina. This increase, the first authorized since 2002, would favor all the companies operating in the country. In addition, it would help Aerolíneas Argentinas to make the wage increases demanded by its employees. At the same time, the Ministry of Planning would be assessing changes in some items of the Aviation Code to make the requirements more flexible for the airlines wishing to settle in Argentina.

Mexico goes for Pacific Airport Group's privatization

The Mexican Government will offer for sale 85% of the shares in Pacific Airport Group (GAP, Grupo Aeroportuario del Pacífico), the operator running twelve airports in the country. This initiative will be implemented through public offering at the Stock Exchange both in Mexico and overseas. The offer for 561 million shares, with an estimated value between 800 million and 1.0 billion dollars will hit a record in Mexico's history, and will be one of the major in Latin America. At present, GAP's strategic partner, Aeropuertos Mexicanos del Pacífico (AMP), holds 15% of the share capital. This group is made up by Dragados Concesiones (34.4%), the Spanish company Aeropuertos Nacionales y Navegación Aérea (25.5%), Controladora Mexicana de Aeropuertos (25.5%), and the electric company Unión Fenosa (14.6%). The main airports run by GAP are the airports of Guadalajara, Tijuana, Puerto Vallarta, San José del Cabo, and Hermosillo, all of them along the Mexican Pacific Coast. According to the last report disclosed by the company, GAP recorded a 9.2% increase in its passengers' volume in 2005, as compared with the figures in 2004, growing from 17.5 to 19.1 million people transported.

Gol expands its cargo service business in MERCOSUR

The Brazilian company announced a significant expansion for its cargo business line known as Gol Log. Thus, it will add new international destinations. They will be Montevideo, Asunción, Rosario, and Córdoba. The first international destination was Buenos Aires, where the company operates since February 2005. With this expansion in the services provided by Gol Log, customers who wish to ship or receive cargo will have a network comprising 43 stations in South America (38 destinations in Brazil, three in Argentina, one in Paraguay, and another one in Uruguay) available. Cargo stands for 3%



of the company's turnover, and 7% of its profits. In addition, its cargo space business structure will be a low-cost one like its fare structure.