

# VIEW'S






## RAK International Airport aiming for growth

“We are very pleased to have a national airline, and together we intend to support each other in growing sensibly over the next few years”

Tourist numbers in Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) have been steadily increasing and are expected to hit 2.5 million in 2012, and the emirate’s airport is set to play a crucial role in reaching those numbers. CEO of RAK International Airport, Roland Blaney sums up the developments taking place at the RAK International airport, picks on the bottle necks and the emerging challenges.

Excerpts:

**Could you take us through the various development projects currently on at the RAK International airport?**

RAK international is a fully functional airport, equipped to offer a wide range of products and services, is under constant review to make it better, in terms of quality and quantity.

Recent developments include upgrading the runway and the passenger terminals, as well as developing VIP handling services, to cater for the ever increasing number of private flight.

**How important is the development of airport for the economy of Ras Al Khaimah?**

Our airport is a gateway to the emirate! Our business is their business, and not just for Ras Al Khaimah – our Airport has positioned itself as the Gateway to the Northern Emirates, making it easily and attainable to visit the UAE through Ras Al Khaimah.

**What is the kind of investment you are making towards revamping the airport?**

HH Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, ruler of Ras Al Khaimah has

implemented key projects to enhance our airport facilities in order to support the growth of tourism.

As well as the influx of international tourists to RAK's new hotels, we have also, through our airport, seen a substantial growth in the residents of the emirates on their travel abroad.

**While giving the RAK International Airport a facelift, are you following any particular model? If yes, what is that?**

There is no particular model that we are following but we have a clear target to develop our Airport so that it is internationally recognized as an Airport of Excellence.

**What is the traffic at the RAK International Airport like?**

The re-launch of RAK Airways has been an exciting development with destinations to Jeddah and Calicut, while we look forward to three new destination before 2011.

Oman Air offer a daily service to their network via Muscat.

We have 4 Hajj flights a day which have brought pilgrims through Ras Al Khaimah from various global destinations.

We have also enjoyed charter cargo flights, and expect with the Afghani reconstructions efforts increasing, that many more contractors will base themselves at our airport.

Reverting back to tourism, we have also had as selection of passenger charter flights, flying in from several European countries.

**Give us an idea about airport's performance in the last two year?**

RAK International Airport has seen a few quieter summers due to the global economic downturn, but we are happy to see some of our older customers flying back in again.

The future looks good – many enquiries and several visits from new companies, along with our competitive tariffs, and airport subsidies for 'new customers', means that the management team at the airport are gearing up for a very busy 2011 and beyond.

**Do you think the relaunch of RAK Airways will put the airport firmly on the global aviation map?**

We are very pleased to have a national airline, and together we intend to support each other in growing sensibly over the next few years.

**Cargo is known to be the major revenue earner for RAK International Airport. What plans do you have for better handling of cargo services?**

As well as new cargo warehouse facilities, we are talking to a number of multi-national logistics companies, who see our hub concept as an opportunity for themselves to share in our growth and success.

We already have established cargo airlines based at our airport, and as well as receiving several more, we are also about to start Road Feeder

services to other UAE airports.

**How important are non-aeronautical revenues to RAK International Airport? What has been the progress made in this sector so far?**

Non-aviation revenue is important for any airport, and we are looking closely into which franchises will be invited to become part of our airport community, such as food outlets, hire car companies and banks.

We are also looking towards having a Logistics Park where some of the prospective clients are also not associated with aviation, while training and maintenance facilities that are based close to or at an airport are also attractive concepts we are presently evaluating.

**Marketing plays important role in development, what are you doing in this regard?**

Considering that the global recession has hindered a lot of our previous efforts, our marketing strategy this year has already resulted in many new enquiries and we will continue to spread the word about our airport's facilities and wide array of services.

**What is your vision for the airport?**

To continue to grow into an internationally recognized airport, with the latest technology, and the best trained staff, to enable us to provide the best of airport experiences.





**Juergen Strommer**  
 Managing Director, Cavotec ME FZE /  
 Regional Manager, ME & India

## Productivity and ecological responsibility are top priorities for ME airports

“The Middle East’s burgeoning aviation industry is becoming more and more concerned about improving productivity and implementing environment-friendly technologies, and this trend points to the region’s development as one of the most sophisticated aviation hotspots across the globe”, said Juergen Strommer, Managing Director at Cavotec Middle East. The Dubai-based company is the regional sales office of global engineering group Cavotec MSL.

“We see our customers all over the region seeking productivity, efficiency and safety all the time. This demand for environment-friendly, reliable and flexible solutions shows the changing trend in the aviation

industry in particular. Earlier on, the practice was to consider systems which were already installed and utilised in other regions of the world such as Europe. Now, however, we can definitely see that this region is becoming the first in the world to adopt new designs and products based on many other parameters to suit the local weather conditions”, Strommer continued.

“A classic example is the newly developed Cavotec Pre-Conditioned Air system (PCAir). This technology is used to provide cold dry air into the aircraft at sub-zero temperatures. Such temperatures up to -20°C (Dry Air) are necessary to cool A380 (Code F) aircraft in the hot Summer Gulf weather conditions, which only

our design can provide. Bahrain Airports Company, following comprehensive product studies and analyses, went for this proprietary solution. We do see similar interests from other major hubs in the region”, Strommer explained.

Another positive indication that the region’s aviation sector is blossoming into a global leader is the continued expansion among airports in the Middle East. Airports in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia all have their plans ongoing and have not been affected much with the recent global economic turndown.

“While we had to go for ‘concept selling’ to propose the Pop-up pit



solutions instead of conventional mobile ground support equipments to the airports in the earlier stages, the newer projects have all gone for this solution, keeping their need for a greener and more productive ramp operation in mind.

This has also enabled Airports to increase and improve upon their capacities. These under-floor solutions also reduce the number of trucks and service vehicles on the ramp, thereby reducing accidents and emissions thereof, let alone minimising operational and maintenance costs", Juergen recounts.

Cavotec today offers wide ranging solutions to the Fueling Industry as well. "Two years ago, we acquired

two companies who are leaders in their field in aviation fueling equipment: Dabico (UK and US) and Meyerinck (Germany). Today, they have been fully integrated into the Cavotec group, and are experiencing very healthy order bookings from Cavotec Sales offices around the world, including the Middle East".

The safety and ergonomic characters of Cavotec's fueling products have won numerous new customers in the region. "While we received orders for supply of a large number of our Pantograph loading arms for loading and unloading trucks at various fuel farms recently, we have also supplied our very popular 'one hand lift' easy access covers from Doha, and expecting

more from other airports in the region.

The Pantograph has an average product life span extending to 15 to 20 years without any maintenance because of our special swivels joints, which makes it an amazing product. This is again, nothing but a shifting demand for safer, more reliable and efficient systems", Strommer concluded.

Cavotec Middle East has expanded its base in the region with training academies for the end users, more display products for the regional clients to inspect such units, and also a well equipped workshop with the ability to provide the crucial after sales support to our clients in the region.