BERLIN BRANDENBURG OPENING “STILL ON TRACK” DESPITE BANKRUPTCY SETBACK

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Plans to open the much-delayed and controversial Berlin Brandenburg International Airport (BER) in Germany remain on schedule for the second half of 2017 despite the bankruptcy of its construction company, Imtech Deutschland, officials said.

BER has issued a statement saying that the airport opening plans will be only minimally affected by the bankruptcy of Imtech, which was announced earlier in August.

BER originally was scheduled to open in October 2011, but that was delayed to May 2012 and then to 2017 following major construction problems and technical issues.

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Imtech was contracted to provide electrical work at BER and, alongside Caverion, was a member of the IMCA consortium which was contracted to provide heating, air conditioning, ventilation and sanitation services.

BER said that a taskforce had been established to mitigate the impact of Imtech's insolvency.

The bankruptcy is just the latest in a long string of problems surrounding the airport's construction. There were reports of a noticeable reduction in the number of employees at the BER site following the bankruptcy announcement, but Imtech and Caverion have committed to increasing the number of employees as soon as possible.

The taskforce estimates that any overall further delays to BER's opening will be in the two to three weeks' range.

Since construction work began in 2006, costs for Germany's third biggest airport have reportedly almost tripled, from €2 billion ($2.3 billion) to €5.4 billion—excluding costs for ground transportation and traffic connections. When it opens, the airport is projected to be able to handle 27 million passengers.

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