



ROYAL JORDANIAN CELEBRATES 52ND ANNIVERSARY

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December 15 marks Royal Jordanian (RJ) Airlines' 52nd anniversary.

On that day in 1963, it launched its operations as the national carrier of Jordan and has since been an ambassador of goodwill and friendship to other cultures, and a bridge that enhances tourism and trade with the world.

King Hussein's constant backing played a key role in the progress witnessed by the airline and helped it boost its competitiveness at regional and international levels.

King Abdullah has continued to support Royal Jordanian. The latest royal gesture was patronising RJ's golden jubilee two years ago; His Majesty wrote a letter during his visit to RJ headquarters, which came half a century after the Royal decree issued by His Majesty King Hussein founding Alia.

RJ President/CEO Captain Suleiman Obeidat expressed the airline's appreciation for the care the Jordanian government gives to the airline and its keenness to maintain RJ as Jordan's carrier that

has contributed to the national economy and supported tourism, culture and the society for 52 years now.

He focused on the airline's determination to take a number of measures that aim at improving the overall performance and increase efficiency and productivity, eventually leading to profitability, saying that this will help develop and overcome the challenges the company faces.

Captain Obeidat added that RJ will keep on improving its services, on facilitating travel procedures and on developing employees' skills by training them according to the best customer service standards, in addition to reinforcing technology within the systems, in harmony with the international airlines, particularly its partners in the oneworld airline alliance.

He expressed satisfaction with the financial results registered in the first nine months of this year, which saw a net profit of JD27 million before tax, an increase of 272% over the same period last year. The company expects to achieve positive financial results for the entire 2015.

RJ entered 2015 while operating a new, advanced generation of 787s. Its fleet also has modern Airbus and Embraer aircraft. Today's RJ fleet age has an average of five years, which puts the airline on par with international carriers.

Captain Obeidat also said that bringing the 787s into the fleet is part of the strategic plan to modernize the long-haul fleet. Royal Jordanian will introduce the rest of the ordered Dreamliners by the end of 2016 and the following few years, in order to meet its operational needs.

Regarding the network, Captain Obeidat pointed out that the airline started operating to three new destinations this year, Najaf, Tabuk and Ankara, raising the number of RJ destinations to 55. It is also going to open new stations in East Asia.

This year, three code share agreements were sealed with Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines and Middle East Airlines, added to 10 similar agreements RJ has with other international carriers.

Captain Obeidat said that RJ invests in its staff by giving them training courses that help make a change in the airline and develop their skills.

RJ recently launched the leadership program and reached a partnership with Oasis 500, whereby RJ staff will generate innovative business ideas across the entire value chain of the company and Oasis 500 will invest and accelerate their growth as startup companies.

Several sessions in quality, cyber security and aviation internal auditor were held to enhance RJ's services.

In the area of corporate social responsibility, Captain Obeidat said that since its establishment, RJ's mission has been to increase social interaction, as the company believes in the role of the public and private sectors in serving different categories of the society. This is embodied in RJ's support for charities and development institutions, and for sport, arts and educational activities.

In 1963, the company had 250 employees, operated two aircraft, a Handley Page Dart Herald and a DC7, and was flying to three destinations, Beirut, Kuwait and Cairo. Now its fleet counts 27 modern aircraft that fly to 55 cities spread over four continents.

The number of passengers RJ carries increased from 87,000 in 1964 to almost 3 million by the end of this year; the number of yearly flights grew from 4,000 to 35,000 over the period.

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