ABU DHABI'S AL BATEEN AIRPORT EXPECTS MORE FLIGHTS DUE TO CHEAPER OIL

News / Airports / Routes, Business aviation

Abu Dhabi's Al Bateen private jet airport expects cheaper oil to give the sector a boost.

The airport is anticipating a rise in flights of about 7 per cent this year, helped by the tumbling oil price. Cheaper aviation fuel makes business jets more profitable to operate.

While the plunge in oil prices has taken its toll on regional economies, private jet operators hope to benefit from improved margins.

"It will help the operators of private jets to reduce their fuel costs, which is around 30 to 33 per cent of their operating costs," said Ahmad Al Haddabi, the chief operations officer of Abu Dhabi Airports.

He expects the number of flights to grow by up to 7 per cent this year, up from the near 33,000 flights at the airport in 2015. As many as 500 passengers are expected to use the airport on a daily basis in 2016, according to Mr Al Haddabi.

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Al Bateen will host a three-day Air Expo in March. The event is expected to receive 20,000 visitors from the industry and host 300 exhibitors split between aircraft manufacturers and suppliers.

Separately, Mr Al Haddabi reiterated that 70 per cent of Abu Dhabi's new airport the Midfield Terminal is "already completed". The Midfield Terminal project, which began in September 2012, is part of Abu Dhabi's broader plans to increase tourist traffic under the capital's 2030 strategy to diversify the economy.

The terminal will have 28,000 square metres of commercial space – including eight executive lounges, an unusually high number that reflects the effort to position the terminal for an increasing share of higher-end passengers as the growth rate of traffic tapers off, the Abu Dhabi Airports chairman Ali Al Mansoori told The National last month.

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