



You can get your daily news updates instantly via Twitter by following [@whthome](https://twitter.com/whthome) or join me on www.facebook.com/WolfgangHThome where the articles also 'cross load'.
Read the daily postings on my blog via www.wolfganghthome.wordpress.com which you can also 'follow' to get immediate notification when a new article is posted. Many of my articles are also published via www.eturbonews.com/africa with added news from the African continent and the world of tourism, aviation and travel at large.

First edition May 2013

East Africa News

EMIRATES SET TO UP FAR EAST FREQUENCIES



Emirates, Dubai's award winning airline, has announced that come October travelers from the airline's East Africa destinations Entebbe, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam will have more choices when flying via Dubai to Bangkok and Hong Kong.

The airline already serves Bangkok 5 times a day now, including one frequency operated by the giant Airbus A380 aircraft, and information availed overnight speaks of a second A380 frequency being added from the 27th of October this year. The other flights are operated on B777 aircraft.

Hong Kong will at the same time get a fourth daily flight, initially to be operated by Airbus A330-200 equipment but due to be upgraded at a later stage to the B777. Said a regular source at the Emirates office in Kampala, on condition of not being named as the person is not the official spokesperson for the airline office: *'Our daily flights from Entebbe are offering travelers from Uganda connections to the entire world. All our flights operate on wide body aircraft which adds comfort. More and more destinations are now served out of Dubai with the Airbus A380 and from October we will fly that aircraft twice a day to Bangkok and the other flights go with B777. At that time Hong Kong will get a fourth daily flight. When you fly from Entebbe, or the other airports in East Africa, a traveler can then take advantage of our transit visas and stop over for a couple of hours in Dubai when going or coming back to see the world's fastest growing super city. We want to remain Uganda's choice foreign airline and our offers and promotions, and adding more destinations all the time, has travelers come back time and again'.*

Emirates currently flies daily from Entebbe to Dubai and from there to 133 destinations in 77 countries including 23 destinations in 12 countries in the Far East and Australasia.

Uganda News

UGANDA LAUNCHES FIRST MOBILE GUIDE APP



Following a flurry of app launches across the border in Kenya has Uganda now pulled level, when ***The Pearl Guide*** launched their own Uganda Guide App earlier this week.

The comprehensive guide application can be downloaded on to iPhones from the '***App Store***' and avails a wide range of services for visitors to Uganda.

On their website the promoters describe their handiwork as: '***the ultimate travel guide to Africa's most diverse and traveler-friendly country with clear maps and detailed coverage of all the best Uganda attractions***'.

Find detailed practical advice on what to see and do in Uganda, relying on up-to-date descriptions of the best hotels, bars, clubs, shops and restaurants of all cuisines.

The Uganda Guide App gives you the key to a memorable experience in The Pearl of Africa.

Key Features of the Uganda Guide App

- ★ A detailed sights section with all the attractions of Uganda.
- ★ Complete background information on Uganda and traveler requirements
- ★ Explore by Map
- ★ Filter the map to show you only the facilities you're looking for near you (Hotels, Restaurants, Bars, Car Rentals and so much more)
- ★ Smart listing of **Points of Interest**: See photo and description of place, Tap Phone Number to dial, Tap Email Address to send email, Tap Website to view site and further info and tap Map Pin to see Map Location.
- ★ Eating out section with Uganda's best restaurants.
- ★ Discover the nightlife of Uganda! Bars, Nightclubs, Cinema, Cultural Dance and much more.
- ★ Find services fast using the comprehensive search section! Car Rental, Currency Exchange, Tour Operators, Cabs and more.
- ★ Smart mini apps! Phrasebook, Trip Journal for sharing experiences, Expense Tracker, Bus Fare Finder and Find A Tour tool that gives you tour options depending on your budget.

Way to go to help promote visits to ***The Pearl of Africa*** which for 2013 has been named by National Geographic as among their top destinations in the world. So come visit or at least take a sneak preview via the new ***Uganda Guide App***. Visit their Facebook page via www.facebook.com/thepearlguide?hc_location=stream or their main company website via www.thepearlguide.co.ug for more information on their services to Uganda's tourism industry, consumers and visitors.



UWA COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY NOW SUBJECT TO ENQUIRY



In a twist of events is information emerging from the Ministry of Tourism that the Commission of Enquiry into the Uganda Wildlife Authority, which dominated headlines for a while in 2010/11, is now itself coming under scrutiny for the apparent failure to account for funds given to them to carry out their work.

The commission was put into place by the notorious self styled *Minister of Crocodiles*, aka Minister for Tourism Kahinda Otafire, after he installed his personal friend and physician as chairman of UWA who then ran riot with demands for massive increases in remuneration and locked horns with the then management trying to protect the organization from being turned into a personal cash cow. Chaired by former Supreme Court Justice George Kanyeihamba, who is now increasingly seen as a maverick eccentric, the commission itself came under sustained fire over allegations of witness intimidation, appropriating itself powers it did not have, vindictive witch hunts and in the end widely dissenting views by members over their report, which the then minister Prof. Kamuntu – himself at the receiving end of Kanyeihamba's foaming wrath – rejected.

Ministry sources now claim that their auditors have failed to establish accountability for much of the over 280 million Uganda Shillings advanced to the commission, much of it paid in form of allowances, fund for upcountry trips not undertaken and other budget items. The lack of field visits in particular further tore into the substance of the already soiled report, as many of the conclusions now appear purely based on often hotly contested testimonies but not inspection of the locations in question, leaving many now wondering what kangaroo court Kanyeihamba conducted, which left the reputation of many senior stakeholders dented at the time. Notable was the initial budget for a probe committee, later turned into a commission of enquiry, only just over 70 million, but eventually quadrupled on insistence of Kanyeihamba, without however producing tangible results leading to any prosecutions, while the time frame too was at least twice extended to complete the task before tourism minister Prof. Kamuntu shut the door on the commission by rejecting any further requests for time extensions. This fact however was seemingly ignored by Kanyeihamba who outlived his mandate by several more weeks before literally being locked out of his offices at the time. Hunter turned hunted it seems and how the once high and mighty fall.

Kenya News

KENYA AIRWAYS ADDS FOURTH FLIGHT TO MAPUTO



Kenya Airways has announced the introduction of a fourth weekly flight, operated by KQ, between Nairobi and Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique. In addition does Kenya Airways codeshare two flights with LAM Mozambique, bringing the total connections per week to now 6.

Information availed quotes Kenya Airways' Group Managing Director and CEO Dr. Titus Naikuni as having said: ***'There is increasing demand for air travel in the continent which makes Africa the new growth frontier in the aviation industry. It is, therefore, important for us to continue to grow our presence across the continent to meet this demand'*** while at the same time appreciating the traffic growth between Southern African destinations and Nairobi. Kenya Airways' traditional routes to Europe, in the run up to the elections in March and as a result of the economic situation in the Eurozone, has significantly reduced during the recently ended financial year 2012/13, leaving growth to destinations in the Gulf, India and the Far East, and of course additional traffic from across the airline's African network.

After posting a sharply reduced profit in the 2011/12 financial year is Kenya Airways expected to post a loss, attributed by a source close to the airline to risen fuel costs, increased competition from in particular Gulf airlines, the drop in demand from European destinations and a massive rise in labour cost, where court disputes have halted major cost cutting measures. The announcement of the annual results is expected in early June, when the airline traditionally presents full year financial and operational details to the public.

KENYA AIRWAYS PARTNERS WITH SAFARICOM TO WIDEN BRAND LOYALTIES



‘This relationship of like-minded organisations demonstrates our collective desire to ensure that we give our customers the best experience through our unparalleled offerings. As we speak, there are over 9.5 billion Bonga Points on our system and we believe that our customers will be keen to start utilising them by taking advantage of the new proposition when making local flights on KQ’ said Bob Collymore, CEO of Safaricom, Kenya’s leading telecommunications company when announcing the launch of their partnership with Kenya Airways, under which their **Bonga Points** – Kenya’s leading brand loyalty programme – can now be used to pay for domestic flights on all of KQ’s services.

The newly launched partnership between the two industry leaders appears part of a newly found spirit of cooperation between Kenya’s leading brands, aimed to cement their respective market positions and exploit synergy effects wherever possible among otherwise non competitive industries seen complementing each other.

Kenya Airways’ CEO Dr. Titus Naikuni was quoted as saying during the launch: *‘We not only focus on offering excellent inflight experience for our customers, we focus on making the entire end-to-end journey right from the purchase of the tickets to the handling at destination airports pleasant’*. Kenya Airways passengers subscribed to the **‘Flying Blue’** frequent flyer programme will also be able to earn their own points, regardless of how their domestic flight is paid for and to take advantage of Safaricom’s bonus points one simply has to dial *126*2# on the Safaricom phone and then select **‘Kenya Airways ticket’** after first booking, on line of course, using Safaricom’s USB modem or phone data packages.

Watch this space for regular and breaking news on all matters concerning aviation and tourism.

KENYA COMMITS MAJOR BUDGET ALLOCATION TO AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS



The government of President Uhuru Kenyatta has proposed to allocate 125 billion Kenya Shillings to the improvements of airports and road infrastructure as initial figures of the 2013/14 budget have become available.

While the nominated cabinet secretaries, formerly known as ministers, are still awaiting confirmation from the parliamentary vetting committee, the incumbent principal secretary, formerly known as permanent secretary, in the National Treasury has been pushing ahead with the budget preparations so as to meet the deadlines set by law when the documents have to be handed over to the national assembly.

Airport development is seen as a crucial component in generating the double digit economic growth outlined in the government’s election agenda, as it will benefit both tourism as well as trade.

Kenya’s main airport, Jomo Kenyatta International – incidentally opened by and named after President Uhuru Kenyatta’s late father, is bursting at the seams and completion of the new terminal four is of the highest priority for the aviation sector, before the turning the fullest attention to **Project Greenfield** which foresees the construction of a second runway and building a new mega terminal, supplementing existing terminals one to three, and four when completed.

‘The flow of air cargo in and out of Kenya is very important. While bulk exports of tea and coffee are mostly shipped by sea, flowers, fresh vegetables and fruits and meat products are shipped by air. There will be renewed focus on export of our products and airports, not just JKIA are very important to facilitate that. Kenya Airways is building up cargo capacity towards that end but the infrastructure is just as important. We need more cold storage and general cargo capacity, more parking for aircraft to load and off load. Kisumu’s expansion was opened last year but there is still a lot of work to be done at Nairobi, Mombasa and Malindi airports’ said a regular aviation source from Nairobi.

Meanwhile have tourism sources also praised the element of road, highway and bridge construction in the budget and expressed their hopes that the Southern bypass of Nairobi can be completed to decongest Nairobi traffic which

has become a daily nightmare for commuters. Others spoke of the urgency to construct the new causeway and road from the Mombasa airport to the South Coast, improve access to Mombasa from the Nairobi highway as well as build a second bridge from the city of Mombasa to the Northern mainland. Access roads to the national parks too were mentioned with special mention of the section between Narok and the Masai Mara, one of Kenya's most visited game reserves.

In addition Kenya is planning some major new railway and highway links connecting the country to Ethiopia and South Sudan as reported here on several occasions in the past, setting the stage for the construction sector to create jobs and play a part in bringing about economic growth. Exciting but also challenging times ahead for Kenya, so watch this space for regular updates from Eastern Africa.

KENYA AIRWAYS JOINS ANTI POACHING ALLIANCE



In an effort to curb the rising tide of wildlife poaching across the wildlife range countries of Africa has Kenya Airways recently formed a new partnership with the Born Free Foundation. The two organizations are teaming up to raise funds for a number of initiatives which contribute towards anti-poaching campaigns and help the conservation of wildlife in Africa.

A high profile event will take place this **Friday, 03 May in Cape Town** at a star studded VIP gala evening at Moyo at the V&A Waterfront. The Born Free Foundation's founder, legendary actress and conservationist Virginia McKenna OBE, who starred in the classic film 'Born Free' is expected to attend. At the event a spectacular pride of 30 lion sculptures will go on auction to raise funds. Under the partnership agreement with the Born Free Foundation will Kenya Airways be auctioning off their own lion to raise funds.

The lions have already made international news around the world, with Queen guitar legend Brian May and singing sensation Kerry Ellis flying into Cape Town to announce the lions arrival and South Africa's platinum selling recording artists, The Parlotones, performing on stage and calling for support.

Kenya Airways Group CEO, Dr. Titus Naikuni, said that the airline had entered the partnership to make a contribution towards conservation of African wildlife. He was quoted in a media release received late yesterday saying: ***'With the threat facing wildlife, which is our heritage in Africa, it is important for the private sector to get more involved in stopping the vice'***. To coincide with this event, Dr. Naikuni announced the launch of the airline's ***Change Brings Change*** campaign, with Born Free as their main beneficiary. The campaign will commence on-board their flights from 01 June to support the Born Free Foundation in their initiatives to tackle poaching in Kenya. The partnership comes in the wake of a surge in wildlife poaching across Africa with elephants and rhinos among the worst hit. Concern is growing amongst conservationists that the endangered African Elephant is currently grappling with what could be the worst crisis to ever hit them since 1989 when international commercial trade in ivory was prohibited. The founder of Born Free Foundation, Virginia McKenna added: ***'The private sector in Africa should take a more critical role in preventing animal suffering and protecting the endangered species'***.

Wildlife remains one of Kenya's greatest natural assets. Attracting tourists in their tens of thousands, the country's rich plant and animal life has earned the country tens of billions of shillings in revenue every year as one of the top rated tourist destinations in the world. The multiplier effect of the economic benefits of Kenya's wildlife is huge, sustaining many hundreds of thousands of livelihoods, both directly and indirectly. Thus, any threat to wildlife is an issue that cries out for the attention not only of the Kenyan people for whom it is an intrinsic aspect of their national heritage, but also for the global community. The recent explosion in wildlife poaching across the country is believed to be driven by organized crime syndicates working for their masters in the Far East, requires immediate action.

But no wildlife law enforcement agency can overcome the challenges on its own, especially not when the current laws are weak and provide only for small fines and short prison terms. Kenya Airways' Dr. Titus Naikuni added to earlier remarks that ***'...now is the time for concerted efforts from each one of us if this barbaric crime is to be eliminated, our heritage safeguarded for the good of wildlife and the immense benefits it can deliver to be secured. The task of conserving wildlife is not just the responsibility of KWS which is the government agency tasked with the responsibility of conserving and managing wildlife, nor can it be the responsibility of the citizens alone. Through this initiative, we intend to have envelopes in all our flights, so that our customers can make donations towards effective wildlife protection. These funds which can be donated in any currency and in any denomination will then be channeled towards priority initiatives to conserve and protect wildlife. This is kind of a boost that KWS and other conservation organizations need to protect and conserve our extraordinary wildlife'***.

EMIRATES OFFERS UP TO 28 PERCENT REBATES FOR TICKETS OUT OF NAIROBI



Starting this morning and ending on the 04th of May will Emirates offer Kenyan travelers up to 28 percent rebates for tickets purchases to a number of destinations, Dubai itself included but most of course beyond into the airline's global network.

A source in Nairobi passed the information yesterday afternoon, outlining the airports to which the rebates apply. Among them are Beijing, Frankfurt, Istanbul, Mumbai, Shanghai, Washington, Guangzhou, Bangkok, Singapore, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad. It was pointed out that the offer is only valid for departures between 02 May 2013, i.e. starting from today, until the 30th June this year..

'This is a great three day offer which presents travelers the opportunity to experience and fly Emirates to these fantastic destinations. Customers will be able to experience the airline's award-winning ICE in-flight entertainment system with a choice of over 1,400 channels on-demand as well as meals prepared by gourmet chefs' said Emirates Vice President for East Africa Region, Khalid Bel Jaflah according to details attached to the communication.

Emirates flies twice a day between Dubai and Nairobi, using a Boeing B777, offering almost instant connections into their entire global network now spanning nearly 130 destinations.

Other airlines are expected to come up with similar offers not just in Kenya but across Eastern Africa, where the Gulf giants Emirates, Qatar Airways and Etihad – the latter flying in code share now with Kenya Airways – are battling for passengers with Africa's market leaders Ethiopian and KQ. The rapid expansion of Turkish Airlines into all of East Africa's key airports, with the exception – for now at least – of Bujumbura and Zanzibar, has also stirred the market considerably as the European carriers like BA, KLM/Air France, Brussels Airlines and Swiss are seemingly left to wonder how the juggernaut of the newly emerging global aviation giants can be successfully countered.

Good news for sure for travelers who got more choices than ever to fly out of Nairobi and at prices which are as affordable as ever. Watch this space for regular and breaking news from Eastern Africa's vibrant aviation industry.

MCTA GIVES CONDITIONAL OK TO PROPOSED HOTEL LEVY BY MOMBASA COUNTY



The Chairman of MCTA, renowned hotelier Mohammed Hersi, has given a conditional agreement to the proposals floated by recently elected Governor Mombasa County Ali Hassan Joho, that a levy be introduced on hotel rates to finance better waste collection and provision of water and sewerage services.

Tourism stakeholders in Mombasa have a long standing feud with the city council over poor, or often totally absent collection of garbage, cleaning the city and providing water to hotels and resorts.

Last year was a provisional agreement struck between the then Mombasa City Council, after the last elections turned into a county government, and the hotels, that a levy could be added provided the council would live up to their side of the bargain and actually collect garbage from hotels. When that not happened were resorts compelled to employ private companies at an added cost and renounced their provisional agreement with the council to avoid double payments.

In response to Joho's promises to substantially improve services provided, Mr. Hersi was quoted in local Kenyan media to have said: *'... so long as we get garbage collection services. This will save us from the agony of hiring private firms [because in the past] we had to incur double costs by paying levy to the council and to private companies since the civic body reneged on the garbage collection deal.* Other coast based stakeholder

representatives also agreed with Hersi, among them the coast representative of the Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers and Caterers, Kenya's primary hospitality industry association. Meanwhile have occupancies at the coast remained depressed, with averages at the South Coast as low as 35 percent, and while some resorts continue to enjoy significantly higher occupancies as a result of their regional and international market mix strategies, most have this year felt the pinch of the low season more than in past years. This has resulted in almost unprecedented offers, in some cases on an *all inclusive* basis, which makes bargain hunting by upcountry visitors right now a favourite pastime and gives visitors from the wider East African region arguably the best deals for a coast vacation in a long time. Airlines flying to Mombasa, like RwandAir and Air Uganda, too are offering special fares during the current low season, making a beach holiday as affordable as it has not been in ages. Time to pack those bags and head to the Kenya coast then.

BRANSON BLAMES US AND UK FOREIGN OFFICES FOR KENYA'S TOURISM DOWNTURN



In a hard hitting commentary has Sir Richard Branson heaped blame on the US State Department and the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office for branding Kenya as a dangerous destination and using language in their anti travel advisories which immediately invalidated any travel insurance, tourists planning to visit Kenya would purchase. *'Sir Richard was entirely right'* said a regular commenter from Nairobi before continuing *'If our visitors cannot count on their travel insurance to cover them when coming to Kenya and by chance encountering a problem, that will surely keep them away. We in Kenya have always demanded that those writing the advisories temper their language and put things in context. Has Kenya issued any such advisories following the sad events in Boston? These travel advisories are the ultimate insults handed to us by countries we have long considered friendly but who, when push comes to shove, treat us like a child who needs a stick. There have been significant shifts in Kenya's foreign alignment over the past years, and the same happens all over Africa. I am not saying that the way we now do business with China is a bed of roses, to the contrary in fact considering the poaching tsunami they brought to us, but politically it is payback to the West. Those are always just wanting and taking and when they give they put a thousand conditions to it. Look how they treated our president in the run up to the elections and how they meddled in our affairs, threatening us with all sorts of things if we elect Uhuru Kenyatta. At times I feel that such travel advisories are written out of spite, and with contempt for us who for long were in a weaker position. Yes, we need their tourist visitors and thankfully many of them ignore their government warnings because they have realized how biased that all is, and how one sided'*.

Sir Richard in his commentary, at least in part, blamed the warnings on Virgin's decision to halt flights between London and Nairobi, which added at the time to the exodus of other airlines from Kenya, negatively affecting the country's tourism performance in 2012. Diplomatic sources in Kenya have promptly denied any hidden agenda and pointed to their legal duty to inform their citizens of risks when coming to Kenya, but as is often the case, these explanations sound hollow and more of an afterthought trying to repair the damage the advisories have done in the first place. *'Pulling their staff from Mombasa last year, or stopping them from their planned Easter holidays in Kenya going to beach resorts and safari lodges was an act of ill will. It was a hysteric overreaction. It created panic instead of calming the situation and it did a lot of financial damage because most of them cancelled and refused to pay cancellation or no show fees, citing their embassy warnings not to travel. I think the American government had another agenda altogether here. Remember when they stopped Delta from flying here at the very last moment when passengers were already going to the airport? Not one international airline stopped flying into Nairobi over the reasons the Americans gave back then. It was so obvious that they had different things in mind and it was not the issue of aviation security in Nairobi'* added another regular contributor on condition of anonymity for fear of being blacklisted for being outspoken.

Sir Richard hit the bull's eye and spoke on behalf of many Kenyans when he blamed his own and the American government for being fork tongued when it came to such advisories, pointing to their own reaction over incidents in their own back yard. There, he contended in the *Independent* incidents like the recent Boston bombings, were glossed over and potential tourists told to come nevertheless while in less dramatic circumstances slapping Kenya with well near prohibition orders for their own citizens.

Blaming Virgin's departure entirely on such issues of course is more than a little farfetched as other reasons came into play at the time, including and foremost poor connectivity from and to Virgin departures for Nairobi, but that notwithstanding, anti travel advisories proved to be particularly unhelpful for keeping Virgin on the route to Kenya. It was also noted by other tourism stakeholders, that following the peaceful elections in Kenya, which passed without the projected violence as peddled by certain overseas media houses, lifting the anti travel advisories was slow in coming and yet they had been slapped down hard and fast to start with.

Kenya is expected to make up for the losses incurred by the tourism industry in the first months of 2013 and the Kenya Tourism Board has asked the government for 500 million Kenya Shillings to run a '*recovery marketing campaign*' similar to what was done in 2008 and 2009. Industry sources nevertheless expressed their doubts that the country could match the 2012 results, which were down from the record performance in 2011 but were also confident that latest in 2014 the upward trend would be restored in full. Time will tell, so for now it is wait and see and hoping that the anti travel advisories still in place will soon be lifted completely.

CHEF'S DELIGHT AWARDS HONOUR KENYA'S BEST CULINARY MINDS



The Chef's Delight Award Dinner last weekend at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in the heart of Nairobi showcased Kenya's culinary best and rewarded those who consistently turn freshly sourced ingredients from Kenya's farms and ranches, lakes and sea into dishes rocking the palates of culinary gurus, food critics and every day diners.

It was particularly rewarding for this correspondent to see names of chefs appear on the honour list who are personally known to me and who over time prepared dishes of their own choosing to showcase their craft tickling my taste buds like Chef Athanasius of The Boma Hotel, Chef Kumar of Sun Africa Hotels or Chef Shailender Singh of Sarova Hotels.

The same of course applied to the names of establishments in the past favourably reviewed, such as The Boma Hotel in Nairobi, Sun Africa's Sovereign Suites in Limuru and the Sarova Stanley in the very heart of the city, underscoring the accuracy of both TripAdvisor reviews as well as articles written about these establishments and their extraordinary restaurants, bistros and coffee shops.

The Gala Night was supported by Kenya's Ministry of Tourism, the Kenya Tourism Board and a number of key corporate sponsors including Brussels Airlines and RwandAir and the proceeds of the night were dedicated to the Lions '*SightFirst Hospital*' in Nairobi.

The organizers's award list covers a total of 8 pages, too much to include here but for the top awards, which went to:

The Top Award for the night as voted by their diners, went to:

For the Best Individual Restaurant and Chef Nairobi:

Haru Restaurant in Karen
Chef J.H. Park

For the Best Hotel Restaurant and Chef Nairobi

Thai Chi Restaurant at the Sarova Stanley
Chef Phansandha Phommee

The Chefs Delight Awards for Most Innovative Chefs 2012 went to

Chefs Tim Freeman of Brew Bistro
Chefs Kiran Jethwa of Seven Restaurant
Chef Archie Athanasius of the The Boma Hotel
Chef Kislay Kumar of Sun Africa Hotels

The Chefs Delight **Lifetime Achievement Awards** went to the following that have been in the industry longest and have made a mark

Chef Giuliano Zanette - Mediterraneo
Chef Shailender Singh – Sarova Group
Chef Pradeep Mullick – Haandi Restaurant
Chef Paul Amur - Golden Spur

Best Restaurants for overall PRESENTATION

Individual Restaurant - Haru Restaurant
Hotel Restaurant - Thai Chi at the Sarova Stanley

Congratulations to all the winners, the complete listings of which can be found via www.chefsdelightawards.com or via their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/chefsdelightawards>.

KENYA AIRWAYS GAINS CARGO AWARD



Last weekend saw Kenya Airways receive the *Air Cargo News Global Service Award* after being voted by the readers of *Air Cargo News*, a leading publication devoted to all matters pertaining to cargo shipments by air. Kenya Airways topped the Africa region and received this award for the first time ever, only a few weeks after putting their first owned B737-300C into operation. Three more of these aircraft will be converted in coming months as the airline is withdrawing all their B737-300 passenger aircraft from service in favour of more modern B737NG's and Embraer 190's. Last year did Kenya Airways in a joint venture with KLM owned MartinAir, introduce a B747-400F into service, which is operating a triangular flight from Nairobi to Amsterdam, then to destinations in the Far East, in particular in China, before returning to Nairobi again.

Nigel Tomkins, the CEO of *Air Cargo News*, was reported to have said when handing over the award: *'All of this year's winners have had to contend with a shrinking marketplace, and increasing regulatory pressures, whilst continuing to bravely invest in game-changing business strategies. Winning an accolade from customers under such difficult circumstances is particularly rewarding. It is very pleasing to see an Africa-based carrier collect this significant award'*.

Receiving the award on behalf of Kenya Airways, Katrina Hanson, Regional Cargo Manager Europe and America, commented: *'We are thrilled to be recognised by Air Cargo News, the industry's leading publication. Winning an award that has been voted for by our customers is the ultimate honour. It has been an exciting year for Kenya Airways Cargo. We have launched our new freighter and plan to increase our cargo volumes worldwide. Africa is a growing market and Kenya Airways will be the cargo airline of choice for the region'*.

Kenya Airways Marketing Director, Chris Diaz, said winning the award was a great motivation to the airline's growing cargo business. *'This positions us really well as a strong global brand and we thank our customers for the confidence they have shown in our service quality'*.

The *Air Cargo News* Cargo Airline of the Year event – now 30 years old – is the longest-established and most cherished worldwide air cargo awards process of its kind and always attracts huge interest. Readers of the globally-circulated newspaper vote online for their best airline cargo service providers, and there are awards too for freight forwarders and GSAs, handling companies and airports.

Tanzania News

PRECISION AIR TARGETED BY SMEAR CAMPAIGN?



There are growing indications that the breaking news story yesterday morning in Tanzania's Daily News about the alleged ban of Precision Air by Zanzibari authorities is both a fluke as well as very likely a targeted attempt, to turn public opinion against Tanzania's only DSE listed airline.

The airline industry in Tanzania had undergone a transformation of sorts since upstart FastJet commenced operations in November last year, but the bad headlines about that airline, first over legal wrangles with partner Fly 540 – now apparently resolved after months of bitter public spats and court action – then the court case over allegations that an expatriate staff verbally abused a local employee and more recently when flights just launched to Zanzibar were taken off the schedule again have kept the public at large wondering what was going on in the corporate suites and skies above.

It is in particular the Zanzibar issue here which is now making pundit wonder in whose best interest it was to launch the story that Precision Air was banned from flying to the Spice Island and rumours are flying wild and fast at present about possible motives and suggested vested interests playing a major role, though lacking evidence to support them and pinpoint those responsible, for now at least.

Precision Air in the meantime issued the following statement, prompted by the Daily News story, to reassure the public that indeed flights to Zanzibar are continuing:

'Following the story published in The Daily News paper ISSN 0856-3812 dated 3rd May 2013 (ZRZ pins Precision Air over 3.4bn/- unpaid taxes) quoting from a letter sent from the Zanzibar Revenue Board (ZRB) to Precision Air Services Plc in which it recorded the ZRB's instructions to "restrain departure of all flights operated by Precision Air Services, as well as closure of its offices", Precision Air has the following statement to make.

Speaking at its HQ Precision Air Services MD and CEO, Ms. Sauda Rajab, released a statement to clarify the situation at hand and reassured the public of continued operations in Zanzibar.

"We wish to notify our passengers and the Tanzania Nation at large that your Airline is still in full operation of its route to Zanzibar. Neither the Zanzibar Revenue Board (ZRB) nor the airport authorities have refused our fleet from touching ground in the Spice Isles" commented Ms. Sauda Rajab, CEO and MD of Precision Air.

She further confirms that the Zanzibar Revenue Board had raised concerns which were discussed by both parties in a meeting held on Monday 29th April 2013 which resulted to mutual agreement. PW is also said to be receiving full support and cooperation from ZRB. "This simply has been a matter of miscommunication between parties but we are delighted that after our discussion our offices are in deed open for business and we welcome you all to continue with your travel plans. We couldn't be in a better working relationship with ZRB as we are today."

As declared in the statement dated 3rd May 2013 and published in the company's website, Precision Air promises to continue maintaining to be the safest and competitive Airline of Choice in the country in providing need based transportation services and equipment to all areas in Tanzania and beyond.

Precision air is the only airline in Tanzania listed on DSE and earlier this year was listed for the first time as Superbrand in East Africa. Precision Air has the largest network than any other airline in Tanzania with operational stations in 18 destinations within and outside Tanzania with Dar es Salaam being its hub and now developing Mwanza as its second hub. Over the past year, the airline added 2 aircrafts (2 ATR 42-600) bringing the fleet to 9 ATRs and 2 Boeings.' [end of statement]

As always, time will tell what is what but for now, all flights by Precision Air are continuing, to Zanzibar and across the entire domestic and regional network the airline has been building up over time, connecting Tanzanians with scheduled flights like no other. Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from the Eastern African region.

IS THE MEDIA HONEYMOON OVER FOR FASTJET



The honeymoon with the local media appears to be over for FastJet, as Tanzania's leading newspaper *Daily News* yesterday broke a story of how airline executives were dealing, or rather not dealing with a major delay, which hit the flights of the airline on Saturday until mid day Sunday. Local observers also questioned the airline's contention that they actually do have three planes available in Tanzania, as none of the spare planes was available to operate the services which were cancelled or delayed for long, one supposedly out on a charter and not a word on the availability of the third plane which was described by an airline executive as *unavailable for the day*. The story by *Daily News* can be accessed via this weblink <http://dailynews.co.tz/index.php/local-news/16838-fastjet-services-disrupted> and is quite self explanatory.

Rwanda News

NEW CONCESSION POLICY OPENS DOOR FOR MORE PARK INVESTMENTS



A recently passed policy on the award of concessions for Rwanda's national parks, in particular for Nyungwe Forest and Akagera, has now opened new opportunities for joint ventures or individual investments in tourism facilities for Rwanda's private sector.

Ms. Rica Rwigamba, who is head of department for Tourism and Conservation at the Rwanda Development Board, launched the information earlier this week, when she listed opportunities for lodges, hotels, restaurants and other tourism related projects as among those which will in the future be offered, through an open tender system, to widen the scope of tourism activities across the country.

Presently is RDB engaged in assessing their own options vis a vis concessions and are identifying locations where such concessions can be offered, in line with park management plans and under due consideration of environmental concerns, putting biodiversity and protection of fragile ecosystems first.

It is understood from a source in Kigali that the country's Private Sector Federation and the tourism sector at large have broadly welcomed the move, as long as nature is put first as this is one of the country's greatest assets.

Concessions will according to details availed run between 5 and 20 years and will be renewable, depending on the terms a concessionaire will have signed with RDB.

With the exception of two properties inside Akagera National Park are presently all other safari lodges and hotels in Rwanda located outside the parks, something some conservationists say is the preferred option, a case in point being the 5star rated Nyungwe Forest Lodge, which is located inside a tea plantation in the buffer zone around Nyungwe, but within a few metres from the edge of the '*Enchanted Forest*'.

Tourism is one of Rwanda's most important economic sectors and last year again added double digit growth with revenues now standing over 280 million US Dollars, due to rise to over 300 million US Dollars in 2013.

Ethiopia News

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES FIRST TO PUT THE B787 DREAMLINER BACK INTO THE SKIES



Ethiopian Airlines yesterday was the first carrier to put the B787 Dreamliner back into the air after the FAA had lifted their grounding order and mandated a so called fix for the aircraft's troubled Lithium Ion battery systems through an Airworthiness Directive.

As reported here several days ago, Ethiopian, currently operating 4 of these aircraft – out of 50 delivered worldwide – started implementing the required changes on their aircraft at their maintenance base in Addis Ababa with Boeing technicians on site to provide technical support, and was out of the blocks first to put the bird into the air again after receiving approval for the work carried out.

Ethiopian Airlines they operated a flight from Addis Ababa to Nairobi yesterday following which, according to a source at JKIA, the aircraft's battery system was thoroughly inspected and found intact, before resuming the return flight to Addis.

One of the Boeing engineers on board the flight reportedly told the media in Nairobi that all potential causes of a future battery fire had been eliminated by the modifications to the battery system.

Senior Ethiopian Airlines management was also on board the flight to demonstrate their confidence in the aircraft's safety, undoubtedly reassuring for the passengers who could not be blamed for perhaps feeling a slight bit like the proverbial guinea pigs.

'It was quite a spectacle to see the attention given to this aircraft after she reached parking position. There was a flurry of activities, not just to disembark passengers and offload the baggage but also then the technicians swooping all over to check the systems on board. Ethiopian was the first airline to get the Dreamliner in Africa and their maintenance center in Addis is a world class facility where many airlines maintain their planes. They were ahead of everyone in modifying their B787's and gave African aviation another first. I am sure in coming days some of the other airlines will also start operations again after they got the analysis of the technicians monitoring this and the next few flights by ET's Dreamliners' added the source by phone from JKIA yesterday.

There is no doubt among aviation observers, that the grounding of the aircraft type in January, following two fires on battery systems, has left many passengers worried and that the return to service of the B787 will require a major PR offensive by airlines and Boeing, to reassure travelers that the modifications now put into place will indeed resolve the core issues with the Lithium Ion batteries in a safe and sustained way.

Boeing meanwhile is getting ready for the delivery of more B787's to airlines around the world, as the production did continue at the rate of 5 per months while the FAA had kept the 50 already delivered on the ground, and once all the modifications on the battery systems of the brand new aircraft have been certified a wave of handover ceremonies will no doubt take place in Seattle under the spotlight of the global media.

Happy Landings to the Ethiopian Airlines B787's, their crews and passengers.

Sudan News

SUDAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES GET QATARI CASH INJECTION



Information became available over the weekend that Qatar has offered a grant to The Republic of the Sudan worth 135 million US Dollars for a joint project, aimed to rehabilitate the Sudan National Museum and carry out infrastructure work on up to 100 archeological sites across the country.

Sudan, in ancient times part of Egypt and known as the *Upper Kingdom*, has a rich history and is filled with monuments, temples and sites in particular along the River Nile. However, unlike Egypt in modern days has the Sudan failed to capitalize on these attractions by opening up to global tourism the way it is done downstream, where fleets of hundreds of river cruisers take tourists to the Egyptian temples and monuments.

After losing over 75 percent of the country's oil wealth, when South Sudan attained her liberty on Independence Day in July 2011, tourism could be a catalyst for economic revival for Sudan but the regime's policies are considered not conducive for allowing in large number of foreign tourists as seen in Egypt, where tourism is the backbone of the economy and key foreign exchange earner. Visa bureaucracy and the need for multiple permits to travel across the country are seen as one of the major obstacles to increasing visitor numbers and recent comments by government officials that the Sudan does not want tourists who come to drink alcohol or want to wear bikinis

were generally considered unhelpful vis a vis key tourist producer countries stepping up and sending more tourists to the Sudan.

The grant by Qatar, which is a major financial supporter of the regime in Khartoum and has financed a highway connecting the Sudan to neighbouring Eritrea, among other projects, will go a long way to restore the National Museum in Khartoum to a better state, rehabilitate exhibits and artifacts while at the same time allowing for fresh archeological digs at key sites.

Sudan's tourism minister Mohamed Al Had made the announcement last weekend when he specified that two new archeological sites will be established in the Nahr Alneel state while initially 27 sites in Northern state and the Al-Bejrawiyya pyramids, aka Meroe pyramids will undergo some major work. These pyramids are ranked by TripAdvisor as the Sudan's number one tourism attraction, though only one of the many which remain relatively inaccessible to visitors from abroad.



(Picture courtesy of Wikipedia)

The project director, Qatar's Abdullah Al -Najar, who previously served with the Qatar Museum Authority, was quoted to have urged Sudanese government bodies to fully support the project's aims and promote the rich heritage and culture of the country abroad, ostensibly referring to the need to attract more paying tourist visitors to sustain these sites for the long term through entrance fees.

Mauritius News

MAURITIUS AWAIT OUTCOME OF 'VOTE FOR KARL CAMPAIGN'



Following the closure of the voting for nominated participants are members of Mauritius' tourism fraternity now waiting with bated breath how successful the pleas of MTPA chief Karl Mootoosamy were to make it into the prize winning categories of the annual **World Travel Awards** which this year celebrate the 20th edition.

The categories where Mauritius was nominated were:

Indian Ocean's Leading Beach Destination: Mauritius

Indian Ocean's Leading Cruise Destination: Mauritius

Indian Ocean's Leading Destination: Mauritius

Indian Ocean's Leading Dive Destination: Mauritius

Indian Ocean's Leading Honeymoon Destination: Mauritius

Indian Ocean's Leading Tourist Board: Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

It was the latter though which raised the temperature once again among the growing opposition to Chief Karl, who was reportedly particularly active in soliciting votes for his own organization, by some described as: *'... a last ditch effort to save his job. Bring home the trophy for best tourist board and hang on for some more or fail and face the music. If he lays another trophy at the feet of his masters they will be pleased with him and believe his yarn'* as one regular source from Port Louis put it, who admittedly is an ardent, if not acid critic of Karl's rule at MTPA. Another source pointed out in a mail received over the weekend that Mauritius deserves to win some of the nominated categories for the quality of the product, but has failed to raise global attention to the attractions the island holds for visitors. *'When the award ceremony is held in Maldives in May we shall know who won what.'*

Competition is getting harder every year. And last year Maldives took our crown as the most visited island destination in the Indian Ocean. What we lack today is not the attractions or the fundamentals in our hospitality industry which won us so many awards in the past. What we lack today is vision. What we lack today is a creative approach to market our strengths. MTPA is stuck in a time warp and had to resort to copy and paste of things from other island. We need new people, a new pan-Mauritius spirit, new leadership with new vision, inclusiveness and not segregation. Karl no longer has that in him and that is why he is so keen to win that best tourist board award, to justify what MTPA has not done. But an award is not a substitute for a good marketing strategy' wrote another source when discussing the subject in recent days.

The entire list of nominations from the Indian Ocean islands can be found at the World Travel Awards website via www.worldtravelawards.com/nominees/2013/indian-ocean. Some 32 overall awards are up for grabs, including best airline, best airport, leading cruise line, leading cruise port as well as destination, hotel and resort and DMC awards, among others. The main contenders for the various categories come from La Reunion, Madagascar, Mauritius, the Maldives and the Seychelles with no nominees from Mayotte or the Comoros. Watch this space for the announcement immediately after the award details are released which should be on or about 12th of May.

Seychelles News

SAILING THE SEYCHELLES GAINS FRESH POPULARITY



The Seychelles archipelago remains one of the most prestigious and sought after holiday destinations in the world with unparalleled natural splendor, daily accessibility by air from around the globe and an exclusive vacation experience for any discerning travelers fortunate enough to find themselves in this paradise. Lush tropical forests give way to magnificent ocean vistas whilst powder white sand is lapped by the crystal clear aquamarine waters of the Indian Ocean. An array of tropical fish and marine animals abound on its shallow coral gardens, while big game fish swarm in its deep, offshore waters just a few miles out at sea.

A vestige of untouched natural beauty, an oasis of tranquility far from the maddening crowds of the modern world, Seychelles's 115 islands are just waiting to be explored. And the best way to do this, of course, is aboard your own private charter boat. Sailing around the 115 islands that make this archipelago often brings the saying that these islands were conceived with sailors in mind as they remain the ideal sailing destination.

Seychelles Yacht Charter (SYC) has been operating in the Seychelles since 2011 and has established itself as one of the industry leaders. From bareboat to luxury full service, the company's fleet is at your disposal and the team is on hand to assist you from first contact through completion of an unforgettable vacation experience. From simple island cruising, excursions to cast away beaches and untouched forests on uninhabited islands to memorable diving encounters, the SYC will let you in on some of the Seychelles' best kept secrets. And if deep sea fishing is your game, SYC's expertise and experience are there to ensure you land the big one.

The diversity of the Seychelles is today renowned as the group of islands offering what is truly a holiday of a lifetime and not just a marketing slogan. The archipelago comprises of both granitic islands, with their high mountains, and they also have coral islands that are flat and surrounded with some of the most amazing marine life. The Seychelles Yacht Charter just announced the international marketing launch of its services and are inviting business partners, travel specialists and travel agents to come and discover for themselves the magic that is the Seychelles Yacht Charter experience. The Seychelles Coast Guard and Air Force are patrolling the waters around the islands permanently and thus ensure the safe and secure enjoyment of such sailing holidays. For more information visit www.seychellesyachtcharter.com to view their various boats available and packages on offer or contact them directly at sales@syc.sc. *Seychelles*, truly *Another World*.

SEYCHELLES' GET SECURITY BOOST WITH ARRIVAL OF BRAND NEW DORNIER 228



The Seychelles Air Force has taken delivery of a brand new Dornier 228 surveillance aircraft, which was donated to the country by India at the height of the fight against ocean terrorism, spread by Somalia's religious extremists. The aircraft, equipped with the latest monitoring equipment, and armed to respond to threats from the air, arrived yesterday at Mahe's international airport.

Besides, what is expected to be regular surveillance flights over the Indian Ocean, where the Seychelles can now exercise monitoring of shipping, fishing and gather ecological and meteorological data, the aircraft has added capabilities like troop and cargo transport to the outer islands, where short airstrips require a STOL aircraft like the Dornier.

A similar aircraft, as reported in the past here, has been operating from Mahe since 2011, when the Indian government made one available to boost anti piracy operations, allowing Seychellois air force personnel to get acquainted with the aircraft type and its operating parameters. Maintenance technicians and on board personnel have already been trained though more are yet to undergo similar courses in India to attain the type rating required to serve on board of the new Dornier.

The arrival of the new aircraft has been praised by a regular tourism source, who said: *'Tourism in Seychelles also involves cruise ships calling on Victoria harbour. It involves leisure yachts and crafts to sail to the Seychelles and stop over before sailing on. It involved deep sea fishing which is a small but important element of what we offer to tourists and only recently did a boat land a record catch again. Being able to operate our own aerial surveillance increased our security in our waters and enhances ocean based tourism activities. But when we look beyond tourism, our fishing sector will also benefit because we will be able to shadow our fleet from the skies and prevent any criminals from approaching them from the sea. These eyes in the skies will be very valuable to us'*.

Seychelles has been at the sharp end of operations against the ocean terrorists, taken dozens into custody and jailed them after trials, but have also set the naval coalition on the road of active engagement with the pirates following several successful rescue missions on sea when captured boats and ships were freed by the determined naval forces of the Seychelles. Positioning armed guards on cruise liners and other ships crossing Seychelles' territorial waters was also an innovation pioneered by the Seychelles, prompting a very significant fall in incidents.

Happy landings to the new aircraft, now flying the Seychelles flag across the Indian Ocean.

AND in closing some worthwhile reads from *'The Livingstone Weekly'* by Gill Staden:

Yellow fever survey coming

From the Zambia Weekly

Government intends to conduct a yellow fever risk assessment survey in Northwestern and Western Provinces – in order to determine the yellow fever burden before the cohosting of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) general assembly in August.

In October 2011, South Africa decided that all travellers to and from Zambia (also those in transit) must carry a yellow fever vaccination certificate. The reason being that the World Health Organisation (WHO) earlier had changed its classification for Zambia from having "no" to "low" risk of yellow fever in Northwestern and Western Provinces.

This has had serious implications for the tourism industry according to stakeholders in the industry. The survey is supposed to be finished by mid-May, reported the Daily Mail.

The rainy season finished a few weeks ago and the bush is getting dry. Already I have seen a few bushfires and more, we know, are on the way as it seems to be a popular pastime just to set our environment on fire whenever we can.

From research it is found that land burned early has a better chance of regeneration than land which is burned late in the dry season. In fact, a bush fire late in the season can have devastating effects on the environment. An ideal situation would be that land was only burned as nature dictates, but with the prevalence of people setting fires for one reason or another, it is best just to burn it early.

While on a visit to the Mosi-oa-Tunya Park this week the Game Scouts were concerned about the need to undertake an early burn, saying that the people moving around the park were already intent on setting fires. This week too there is a notice from Kariba saying that early burns will begin soon.

The fire season begins ... as does the hazy atmosphere and dusty skies over Africa ...
