

AIR INDIA INTERNATIONAL is one of the major international airlines operating scheduled passenger, freight and mail air services to and from London

This airline traces its ancestry back almost twenty years to 15 October 1932 when Mr J R D Tata, present chairman of the company, flew a small three-seat Puss Moth monoplane from Karachi to Bombay and Madras carrying air mail. A regular route was established to connect with the Imperial Airways' England - India service

By 1935 Tata Air Lines, as the company had become known, was flying Karachi - Bhuj - Ahmedabad - Bombay - Hyderabad - Madras twice weekly and had also opened a new weekly service between Bombay and Trivandrum in south India

In 1938 the Karachi - Madras services were operated four times a week in connection with the Empire Air Mail Programme and the terminal was pushed south to Colombo. The Bombay - Delhi route was also opened that year.

Operations were progressively built up and the company maintained its services during the war in spite of great difficulties

In 1946 the Tata Air Lines became AIR-INDIA LTD. During that year Air India employed the first air hostesses in India

Air-India played a large part in the evacuation of civilians from the Punjab in 1947 and later carried troops and ammunition to Kashmir



Air-India had the honour of flying the new flag of India for the first time when on 3 August 1947 one of the company's DC-3s left India for Moscow carrying the first Indian Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.

Following India's independence it was decided that India must operate its own long-distance international air routes and so on 8 March 1948 AIR-INDIA INTERNATIONAL LTD was incorporated. This company is managed by Air-India which company holds 51% of the shares. The Government of India holds the other 49%. This combined working of Government and private enterprise has proved extremely successful. During the last financial year, the first complete twelve months of operation, the company made a profit.

Even before the incorporation of the new company Air-India staff had arrived in London and at other points to prepare the way for India's first long distance air service.

Lockheed Constellation four-engined airliners were ordered from the United States. Flying crews and engineers were sent to California to learn to operate these new airliners. These men already had a vast experience of airline operation, many of the captains having flown well in excess of half a million miles by that time.

The first of the original fleet of Constellations arrived in London on 14 March 1948 on its delivery flight from California to Bombay. This was the Moghul Princess commanded by Captain K R Gazdar who had first flown the India - England route nearly twenty years earlier when he made the return journey in a light two-seat Moth.

The first proving flight over the route was made between 11 and 14 April by the Constellation Rajput Princess flown by Captain A C Gazdar the operations manager of the company.

Following a series of proving flights the route was opened on 8 June when the Malabar Princess left the Santa Cruz Airport at Bombay and after calls at Cairo and Geneva arrived at London Airport on the following day to inaugurate a regular weekly service.



The scheduled time for this flight of under 24 hours was the fastest ever air service between England and India - Air-India International still flies the fastest services over this route

Gradually the frequency of the service has been stepped up until today four services are flown in each direction every week. These services are flown over slightly different routes to offer the maximum service to the travelling public

One service from London calls at Rome and Cairo and terminates at Bombay; the second service calls at Geneva, Cairo and Bombay terminating at Calcutta; the third service calls at Geneva and Cairo and terminates at Bombay; the fourth service is a nonstop express to Cairo, it continues through to Calcutta with a stop at Bombay

Air-India's internal network in India and to Pakistan and Ceylon offers the Air-India International passengers special advantages with through connections. Air-India serves Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Calcutta, Cochin, Coimbatore, Colombo, Delhi, Jaipur, Karachi, Madras, Trichy and Trivandrum

During 1949 Air-India International introduced two of the latest type Constellations on its services. These airliners the Himalayan Princess and the Maratha Princess offer an even higher standard of comfort for passengers

In January 1950 a new route was opened linking India with East Africa. This weekly service, also operated with Constellation airliners, flies from Bombay by way of Karachi and Aden to Nairobi. This route is flown in half a day

During the first three years of operation Air India International has carried almost every kind of passenger ranging from the Indian Prime Minister, through film stars to entire ships' crews - the latter are now one of the greatest users of air transport and in order to handle these large single loads Air India International has designed a new type of chair which in a matter of a few hours converts the luxury 40 seater into a high density 56 seater



Little can be said at present of future development apart from the fact that the company is constantly striving to improve its service even further to ensure the highest standard of service

Jet-propelled airliners are being studied and already the chief executives of this company have flown the 500 m.p.h. de Havilland Comet four-jet airliner.

END