

Cargo airline Quikjet launches in India

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Charter cargo operator Quikjet looks set to finally launch operations some three years after it was established after being granted an Air Operating Certificate (AOC).

The carrier, which has one ATR 72 based at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, hopes to "fill a critical void" in India's air cargo market by offering chartered domestic cargo services.

Quikjet is now seeking out its first contracts and according to airline spokeswoman Vijaya Menon, it has had positive discussions with distributors in Kolkatta in north east of India to carry a variety of goods, from shrimp to dangerous cargo for the military and atomic industries.

Quikjet Cargo will offer its aircraft for long-term lease and charters while also setting up a scheduled network, it plans to increase its fleet as business grows.

"While there has been an explosive growth in the number of passenger airlines, the air cargo segment has barely witnessed any activity," said Quikjet CEO and former Air Deccan operations executive, Captain Preetham Phillip.

"Presently, due to the lack of freighter aircrafts in the country, the express and cargo industry is largely dependent on the belly space of passenger airlines, which is not conducive for time critical shipments or movement of dangerous goods."

Establish in 2008, with financial backing from a number of Indian investors, including Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services; Infrastructure Development Finance Co and the Tata Capital Ltd group, Quikjet purchased a B737-200 but was forced to return the aircraft after it failed to receive an AOC, Menon said.

In 2011, Farnair Switzerland, a European cargo airline, acquired a majority stake in the carrier.

Phillip added: "We are working on differing business models to provide customised and general air cargo solutions to businesses across the country.

"We plan to begin our operations with one aircraft and will gradually add aircrafts to the fleet to have a pan India network."