

Aeroflot to start Hongkong route

BY S Y YUE

THE Soviet Union's national carrier, Aeroflot, will inaugurate direct flights to Hongkong next year, according to the airline's agent in the territory.

The deputy general manager of the Global Union Express, Teddy Chung, said Aeroflot would expand its existing Moscow-Bangkok flights to Hongkong in 1992.

Global Union Express is Aeroflot's general sales agent in Hongkong.

"I hope it can fly to Hongkong in the first half of 1992," Mr Chung said in a press release.

Four Soviet civil aviation officials are expected to come to Hongkong aboard the national carrier.

Principal assistant secretary of the Air Negotiations Unit, John Wakeling, said talks between Hongkong and the Soviet Union were concluded six months ago to enable reciprocal air services for the two places.

Mr Chung said the Asia-Pacific was high on Aeroflot's agenda for further expansion and Bangkok would be the

hub for this region. The airline planned to set up an office and post Soviet personnel in Hongkong.

Aeroflot is to change its flight routing from Bangkok to Moscow two ways - one via Dubai and the other via Karachi and Tashkent.

The frequency would be increased from four times a week to five from January next year.

Two of these flights are expected to serve Hongkong.

On its Moscow-Dubai-Bangkok route, Aeroflot would use a new model Airbus, the A310-300, which can seat 193 passengers and carry 9.7 tonnes of freight with a maximum range of 9,800 km.

The airline has ordered five Airbus 310-300 to be delivered between this month and May next year. A provisional order for five more of the aircraft has been made.

Mr Chung said the airline's expansion was in line with the changing outlook of tourism, investment, trade and joint ventures in the Soviet Union following its new policy of turning the economy into a market-oriented one.