

AHK granted licence to fly local cargo route

By Divina Yumol

AIR Hongkong (AHK) has obtained an Air Operators' Certificate (AOC) from the Civil Aviation Department to become Hongkong's fourth cargo airline.

Owned and operated by a consortium of Hongkong businessmen, Air Hongkong was given its worldwide cargo AOC on January 25. It started flying its own Boeing 707 last month operating on cargo routes in and out of Hongkong.

The air cargo carrier currently offers services from the territory to Katmandu, Nepal, Bombay and the UK.

It is now looking at the possibility of expanding its services to Australia, Japan and other countries in Asia.

The company has no definite plans as to when these services will

be starting although it already holds rights to fly to these countries on a chartered basis.

"It would largely depend on the volume of trade that Hongkong would have with these countries," a company executive said yesterday.

He explained that because of the inconsistent nature of the cargo business in Hongkong it was difficult to determine when the demand for cargo space on carriers is high or low.

"We are still studying our prospects as we would like to route our Boeing realistically."

Air Hongkong was established in November, 1986, by three local businessmen for the purpose of providing air cargo service to and from Hongkong on a chartered basis.

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Sources from the aviation industry, however, said that the company had not ruled out the possibility of flying passengers later.

Should Air Hongkong eventually reach passenger-carrying status, it would become the third local passenger carrier — after Cathay Pacific and Dragonair.

As an air cargo carrier, Air Hongkong is now the territory's fourth cargo airline behind Cathay, Dragonair and the Australian Ansett-backed Transcorp which was also granted an AOC last year, allowing it to use the territory as its home base.

It is now exclusively a freight handler operating cargo flights between Hongkong, Sydney and Singapore with its Boeing 707-303 jet.