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Oman Air Announces Most Successful Year Yet for Desert Operations

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Oman Air has announced that 2010 was the most successful year to date for its Desert Operations, carried out on behalf of Petroleum Development of Oman (PDO).

In 2010, Oman Air operated 693 flights, carrying 110,000 passengers between the three desert airports of Fahud, Marmul and Qarn Alam and Muscat. Up to 500 passengers per day flew between two or more of the destinations, with Oman Air operating an average of three flights per day, six days per week. In addition, the airline has based dedicated teams at each of the PDO airports, consisting of passenger handling specialists, ramp services staff, engineering technicians and ground support equipment technicians.

Mohamed H Al Zakwani, Oman Air's Manager, Desert Operations, commented:

"Oman Air is pleased to be supporting PDO's oil and gas exploration and its subsequent contribution to the national economy by operating these desert services. The combination of Oman Air's fast, efficient services and outstanding passenger comfort have led to Desert Operations' busiest year yet, with more flights and more passengers than ever before.



"PDO's investment in its airport services, which has seen an expansion in capacity at each of the desert airports, alongside the installation of the latest systems for passenger handling and load control, have also contributed to the increased success of these flights. However, none of this could have been realised without the hard work and commitment of the Desert Operations staff and their colleagues throughout Oman Air and I would like to express our appreciation for all their efforts.



"We look forward to building on the achievements of 2010 and working closely with PDO to deliver even greater success over the coming year."

Flights to desert airstrips around Oman have been operating for over 30 years and the recent development by PDO of their airports at Fahud, Marmul and Qarn Alam has allowed Oman Air to deliver an enhanced service to these destinations from the airline's base at Muscat International Airport. Following decades of propeller-driven services, using Skyvan, Fokker 27 and ATR aircraft, jet operations were launched in 2007 and extended tarmac runways now allow Boeing 737s to service the routes.

The first flight each operating day departs Muscat International Airport at 07.15, the second flight departs shortly before midday and the last flight leaves at around 15.00, returning to Muscat at 18.00 hours. Each flight lands at Fahud, Marmul and Qarn Alam airports before returning to Muscat and flight times from Muscat to Fahud are 35 minutes. Muscat to Marmul takes one hour 20 minutes and Muscat to Qarn Alam takes 55 minutes.

Mohammed H Al Zakwani concluded:

"Oman Air's emergence as an international luxury carrier has been rightly acclaimed over recent months, as has the overall increase in passenger numbers and revenues. I am delighted, therefore, that this domestic service has achieved similar levels of success, confirming Oman Air not only as an international success story, but also as vital part of our national infrastructure."

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