

aircraft will be operated by regional subsidiary Royal Air Maroc Express, which is scheduled to start operations this summer with four leased ATR 72-200s. Deliveries of the new -600s, powered by Pratt & Whitney PW127M engines, are to start in spring 2011.

IT Security Scramble

In the next 18 months, airline IT security departments will be focused on complying with the new Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, according to the SITA Global Airline IT Security Survey 2009. Major credit card companies—American Express, Discover, JCB, Master Card Worldwide and Visa International—devised the new standard after incurring the loss of millions as a result of “fraud, breaches and other vulnerabilities,” according to Mark Prince, SITA director of consulting for security, voice and convergence. Prince says most of the compliance requirements are “common sense” actions, such as encrypting data transmitted across open public networks. Airlines will be required to meet one of

two compliance deadlines, September this year or September 2010, depending on the volume of card transactions handled per year—levels range from 20,000 to more than 6 million. Penalties for noncompliance include hefty fines, increased auditing requirements or even loss of the ability to process credit card transactions, says SITA.

Falling Star

Creditors are applying for Chinese private carrier East Star Airlines to be declared bankrupt, while Air China's parent—China National Aviation Holdings Co.—has started preliminary talks to buy the business. East Star ceased operations Mar. 15 and has losses of 500 million yuan (\$73 million). China National said it was likely to buy 90% of the carrier for 600 million yuan. East Star's operator's certificate would be a prize, as the Civil Aviation Administration of China will not entertain applications for new ones until next year.

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