

Qatar Airways closer to flying on 'green fuel'

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QATAR Airways is one step closer to becoming the world's first airline to fly on gas-to-liquids kerosene oil as its aircraft engines will be certified for GTL use by the year-end.

Certification from the Federal Aviation Agency (US) and European authority concerned for GTL use in Qatar Airways' aircraft engines was expected by 2009-end, the airline's CEO Akbar al-Baker, told Gulf Times yesterday.

"We need certification from these authorities before we can start using GTL in our aircraft engines. This is because our engines are made either by American or European manufacturers," he said.

GTL kerosene is highly environmentally-friendly and will significantly reduce carbon emissions. It is dubbed "green fuel" because of its non-polluting features.

Qatar is fast emerging as the global centre for GTL technology as it has invested billions of dollars in setting up two gas-to-liquids projects at Ras Laffan - Pearl GTL and Oryx GTL.

Pearl GTL is a joint venture between QP and Royal Dutch Shell and can produce 140,000 bpd of GTL products as well as 120,000 bpd of condensate, LPG and ethane from two trains and Oryx GTL. The project is on track for a late 2010 start-up.

Oryx GTL is Qatar's first gas-to-liquids plant and is a joint venture between Qatar Petroleum and Sasol (South Africa). The plant's design capacity is 34,000 barrels a day.

Qatar Airways has already signed a 'working together' agreement with QP, Shell, Airbus, Rolls Royce, Qatar Science & Technology Park and Woqod as part of the national carrier's project to launch GTL-powered flights.

Qatar Airways will be the world's first airline to power commercial aircraft with natural gas.

Al-Baker said Qatar's GTL producers would make available adequate quantities of gas-to-liquid fuel the airline required for its flights.

"Since it is a normal fuel, the engines do not require any modification. Also, additional facilities are not required at Doha International Airport to store it," he said.

{ By Pratap John- Gulf Times }