



Tech Focus

The Concorde phenomenon

As British Airways is to retire its supersonic passenger jet by the end of the year, let's look ahead to its possible successors

BBC ONLINE

THE unmistakable low-pitched rumble is still to be heard daily over West London as four Olympus turbojets power British Airways' flagship service westward once again.

On board flight BA001, up to 100 passengers relax in their seats, knowing that, in a little under four hours, they will be touching down in New York City.

With return tickets currently starting at £3,655, Concorde is not cheap but, for those for whom money is no object, there's just no other way to fly.

'Hooked'

Fly "the Conk" and you could be rubbing shoulders with Tony Blair, Joan Collins, Sting or Sir David Frost - who is said to have travelled on the aircraft more times than anyone but its crew.

But even though its iconic, futuristic, outlines continue to turn heads wherever it flies, Concorde's days as the ultimate airliner seem numbered.

BA's Concorde is expected to cease flying in the autumn and Air France has reportedly pencilled in 2007 as the retirement date.

Though still a totem of modernity, Concorde is decidedly middle-aged.

A child of the 1950s - it was first mooted a month after the Suez crisis in 1956 - it is a product of nationalised industry, an echo of an Anglo-French technological future which never happened.

The aircraft was developed during an era of consensus politics, when such diverse figures as Harold Macmillan and Tony Benn shared a common vision of the role of government in directing and organising such projects.

As such, Concorde has more in com-



PHOTO: AFP

The first and only supersonic passenger jet going into retirement

mon with the 1930s than the present day.

It was the then President of France, Charles de Gaulle, who first named the Concorde project in 1963.

Between then and its first commercial flights on 21 January 1976 - British Airways from London to Bahrain and Air France from Paris to Rio de Janeiro via Dakar - more than £1bn was spent on research, development and production, creating hundreds of jobs in both the UK and France.

Bounced back from tragedy
But its critics, and there are many, see the aircraft as dirty, noisy and cramped.

The sonic boom produced by the aircraft prevents it from operating at supersonic speeds over land and its

maximum operational range of 4,500 miles means that the world's most lucrative route - Los Angeles to Tokyo - has never been on the cards.

There is no doubt, though, that the Concorde project has been a triumph of hope over adversity.

Despite the tragedy of the only Concorde crash, in Paris in July 2000, resulting in 114 deaths, Concorde has bounced back. A £17m refit, including new seats designed by Sir Terence Conran, spruced up British Airways' aircraft.

Even recent engineering and mechanical problems have not been so much serious safety concerns as issues of "reputation", according to industry experts.

And, as yet, no other aerospace company has taken up the challenge of

building a commercial aircraft to fly faster than a speeding bullet.

The ill-fated Tupolev TU 144, a Russian Concorde clone, made little impact during its tragic lifetime and putative supersonic projects from Boeing and McDonnell Douglas came to nothing.

There is talk today of large, subsonic aircraft, carrying more passengers further.

But the current state of the international aerospace industry, still recovering from 11 September 2001, with many long-standing airlines going to the wall and in a climate of economic uncertainty, may mean a long wait before Concorde's successor finally takes to the skies.

Web Tech

Too many people love Iraqi information minister

REUTERS, Los Angeles

People around the world have taken a unique liking to the public relations stylings of former Iraqi information minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf. Too many people, apparently.

A Web site that sprang up on Thursday called welovetheiraqiinformationminister.com was quickly forced offline as a rush of global interest drew as many as 4,000 requests a second for the page.

With his trademark beret and sly smile, Sahaf became a cult figure on television with his daily briefings, appearing from behind a sea of microphones as he condemned the American "infidels" and often flatly denied what viewers around the world

saw unfolding on their TV screens.

Kieran Mulvaney, a writer based in Alaska who set up the Web site, told Reuters on Friday that he has been inundated with requests for interviews from the likes of CNN and the BBC.

Mulvaney, who is writing a book on global warming, said he has also had unsolicited requests to sponsor the Web pages that started as a joke for he and his friends.

He said the new version of the site, due to debut on Saturday, will make money from the sale of trinkets like T-shirts and aprons.

In keeping with the tongue-in-cheek theme of the site, the aprons will bear one of the now-disappeared Sahaf's most popular catch phrases: "God will



The home page of the internet site welovetheiraqiinformationminister.com

Dr. Tech

Dear Dr. Tech,
I have an awesome wallpaper that's obscured by all those nasty little icons cluttering my desktop. Please let me know how to make them all disappear, at least temporarily.
Shahed

Dear Shahed,
Here is how you can do that.
Win 95/98 instructions:
First, you're going to need to have Active Desktop installed and active. If you have IE 4.0 or better, you're probably all set in this department. Here's the blow by blow:
1. First, open My Computer or Windows Explorer. From the View menu, go to Folder Options, then click the View tab.
2. Now, under the Visual Settings section, click the "Hide icons when the desktop is viewed as a web page"

checkbox. Hit OK.
If you already had your desktop set to be viewed as a web page, you will find all your icons have magically disappeared. To get them back, right-click the desktop and select Active Desktop, then click the "View as web page" menu item.
Win ME / 2000 Instructions:
1. Right-click your Desktop and select Active Desktop from the resulting menu. A sub menu will pop up. If the Active Desktop item doesn't have a check next to it, click it (Win 2000 users need to make sure the "show web content" item is checked instead).
2. From the same sub-menu mentioned above, click the "Show desktop icons" menu item to turn them on or off.
dailystartech@yahoo.com

Tech Toon



"Every time we successfully recover from a technical problem, the computer likes a high five."

Star Tech Quiz 35

Check the box beside the correct answer

1. You try to boot from diskette and receive the following error message, "BOOT: could not find NTLDR, please insert"

Windows 98 DOS
 Windows 2000 A.Windows NT

2. A user's system is running slowly after installing a new application in Windows 98. What should be checked?

Scan REG Log Free space on the hard drive
 Available System A.Rotation speed of hard drive

Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Address: _____
Contact Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Last week's answers
1. All of the above 2. Peer-to-Peer 3. Transport Layer

Winners: Faisal Khan
342/B, M H Hall, JU, Savar, Dhaka

Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by April 14, 2003.

Bio Tech

DNA chip gives drug advice

BBC ONLINE

DOCTORS will be able to personally tailor treatments using a DNA test which shows which drugs will work best.

Its makers Roche say the chip will cut out the need for patients to try out a series of drugs, risking side effects or reactions, before finding the right one for them.

The chip will be able to analyse drugs used to treat conditions including heart disease and psychiat-



The chip tests for the presence of a key enzyme

ric disorders.
The test will be used in high-tech laboratories in the US from May, and the company is also seeking European approval for the chip.

Processing
Factors such as age, what other drugs a patient is taking, diet and how ill a person is affects how well a drug works.

But variations in genes controlling how drugs are metabolised, transported around and used by the body also have an influence.

The Roche test focuses on a drug-metabolising enzyme called CYP2D6. Around 7% of Caucasians are

known to lack the enzyme, making them poor metabolisers of drugs.

Another 2 to 4% have enzymes which either function inefficiently or too well, causing problems in how the body processes drugs.

The test takes blood cells, or cells from the inside of the mouth and amplifies the area of the genes which control how the enzyme works.

Scientists can see read the genetic pattern they try to see to identify the problem.

Adjustment
Everyone has two copies of each gene. If the test shows defects in each copy, the person will metabolise drugs poorly.

If the person has one normal and one duplicated version, they will be "ultrarapid" metabolisers.

Walter Koch, director of the pharmacogenetics department at Roche Molecular Systems where the test was developed, said knowing a patient's genetic make-up would help doctors tailor the treatment.

"Knowledge of the intrinsic genetically-determined metabolic activity will allow physicians to adjust doses accordingly to reduce the potential for adverse reactions and to improve drugs' efficiency."

Dr Helen Wallace of the UK campaign group GeneWatch said genetic make-up could not be relied upon as an accurate predictor of how people will respond to drugs.

She told BBC News Online: "There are potential dangers as well as benefits in using genetic test results to decide who gets which medicine."

Old friend



PHOTO: AFP

Professor Ian Wilmut of the Roslin Institute looks at his old friend, 'Dolly', the world's first cloned sheep, who died February 14, 2003 and has now been pickled and mounted on a straw-covered plinth and is on permanent display at Edinburgh's Royal Museum April 9. Dolly was born on July 5, 1996.

Tech Jobs

- Metatude Asia Ltd**
Post: Assistant Software Quality Assurance Engineer
Last Date: May 06, 2003
- Digitalhubdd**
Post: Quality Control Officer
Last Date: April 23, 2003
- BIT(Chittagong)**
Post: Programmer, Assistant Programmer
Last Date: May 04, 2003
- Maestro Ltd**
Post: Analyst(Accounting software)
Last Date: April 20, 2003
- Bangladesh University**
Post: Lecturer - Business Administration, Computer Science, English & Physics, Professor - Computer Science, Associate Professor - Computer Science, Assistant Professor - Computer Science
Last Date: April 25, 2003
- Alphasoft Systems**
Post: Software Developments
Last Date: May 06, 2003
- Australasia Institute of Business and Tecnology**
Post: System Engineer
Last Date: April 30, 2003
source: www.bdjobs.com

Tech Snaps

Executive Committee of Bangladesh ICT Journalist Forum formed

The Executive Committee of Bangladesh ICT Journalist Forum (BIJF) has formed in a General Meeting, held on April 10, says a press release. The journalists who are working in the ICT sectors in different Media of Bangladesh have formed BIJF. The BIJF members will meet with the Executive Committee members of Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) on April 17 at the office of Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS).
The Executive Committee members are: President - Ahmedul Islam Babu (The Bangladesh Observer), Vice-President -(1) Jesan Rahman (The Daily Ittefaq), (2) Shakawat Alam Rono (E-biz), (3) Hasan Bipul (The Daily Borer Kagoj), General Secretary - M. A. Haque Anu (Computer Jagat), Joint Secretary (1) Abdullah-al Amin (The daily Pungon), (2) Muhammad Khan (Ajker Kagoj), Treasurer Parvez Pshonchoy (Computer Tomorrow), Organizing Secretary Md. Maruf Hossain (Computer Tomorrow), Publicity Secretary Mohammad Kawsar Uddin (Computer Barta), Research Secretary Mahmud Hossain (The Daily Sangbad), Office Secretary Mahabubul Alam Sohag (Computer Barta), Cultural Secretary Nafid Imran Ahmed (The Daily Star)

Photo Tech



PHOTO: AFP

A radio and TV-technician repairs a Grundig radio on April 14 in Essen. Grundig German electronics goods maker said it filed for insolvency, a week after Turkish group Beko announced it was abandoning plans to acquire the maker of television sets and car radios. A company spokesman said Grundig's new boss Eberhard Braun would make a statement about the group's future later in the day.

Best 10 Websites Travel - Adventure

- GORP.com**
GORP.com is the largest and most trafficked Web site dedicated to outdoor recreation and adventure travel.
URL: <http://www.gorp.com>
- National Geographic Travel**
Travel guides to US and Canadian destinations, a magazine, features about worldwide destinations, and links to tools.
URL: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel>
- MyTravelGuide.com**
World travel guide including a guided tour search, online travel help, chat, travel tools, on-line booking, and more.
URL: <http://www.mytravelguide.com>
- World Travel Guide**
Comprehensive guides to all the world's countries - aims to answer all your travel questions.
URL: <http://www.travel-guide.com>
- Adventure Travel**
Tips and destination ideas. Information on agents and tours, senior, single, and family travel, equipment outfitters, and numerous outdoor activities.
URL: <http://activetravel.about.com>
- CNN.com**
CNN Travel Guide
Travel features, destination information, and city guides.
URL: <http://www.cnn.com/TRAVEL>
- Expedia.com**
Expedia Travel
Compare prices, shop for a vacation or cruise, reserve a room or rent a car. Microsoft Expedia provides a one stop shopping travel experience.
URL: <http://www.expedia.com>
- Travelocity.com**
Travelocity
Offers a variety of travel services, including fare finder, hotel and car rental information, reservations, and destination information.
URL: <http://www.travelocity.com>
- The Savvy Traveler**
Public radio travel program produced by Minnesota Public Radio.
URL: <http://www.savvytraveler.com>
- AOL Anywhere - Travel Web Channel**
Includes destination guides, reservations, weather, and vacation information
URL: <http://www.aol.com/webcenters/travel/home.adp>