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Comair to fly to the island of St Helena

2015-03-17 14:50

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Jamestown, Saint Helena - The remote South Atlantic island of Saint Helena, where French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled, is to get its first commercial air service, officials have announced.

The government of Saint Helena, a British territory, said Monday that final negotiations were underway for Comair to fly once a week from Johannesburg to a new airport due to open next year.

The flight on the 138-seat Boeing 737 will take four and half hours -- in stark contrast to the five days it currently takes on an irregular boat service from Cape Town.

"This marks a very positive step for St Helena in working with an airline... which provides an excellent gateway to the rest of the world," the island government said in a statement.

The airport is likely to trigger an influx of tourists to Saint Helena, where Napoleon was exiled in 1815 after his defeat by the British at Waterloo.

He died on the island in 1821.

Saint Helena, which now has 4 200 inhabitants, was a busy stopover point between Europe, Asia and South Africa until steam ships and the Suez Canal changed sea routes.

Comair, which has a licence agreement with British Airways, is a South African aviation company founded in 1946.

- AFP

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The airport project was entirely funded by the Department for International Development, (DFID) of the United Kingdom. It is therefore their discretion whom they choose as operators to their airport.
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Pleased it will be on a B A branded Comair 738.
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I'm reading this with mixed emotions. Will certainly make Saint Helena "easier to get to", but is that not also what is likely to take away the charm and magic of it? Not so sure that progress is always entirely a good thing. Does have benefits but always some or other draw back as well.
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