

# The Business

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BUSINESS NEWS INFORMATION

■ Dr Fakhro opening VLCC's first Bahrain branch in Zinj, watched by Mr Al Sho'ala, Mr Luthra and Mr Ahuja

## RSA names new chief executive

**MANAMA:** Insurance group RSA has announced the appointment of Paul Holmes as the new chief executive officer of its Middle East operations following the retirement of Patrick O'Flynn.

Holmes' appointment will be effective from January 1.

Holmes joined RSA two years ago as chief executive officer for the company's UAE operations.

He has worked in the Middle

East for more than 10 years and brings with him a tremendous amount of experience, both from emerging markets and the more mature UK market.



■ Mr Holmes

East for more than 10 years and brings with him a tremendous amount of experience, both from emerging markets and the more mature UK market.

In his time with RSA, he has managed to transform the UAE business, achieving exponential growth across various entities.

Holmes has 23 years of experience within the insurance industry, occupying a range of senior managerial roles in the UK and the Middle East for Norwich Union, and most recently, the French Insurer AXA following their acquisition of the Norwich Union business in the Middle East.

## BA to resume Jeddah and Riyadh flights

**MANAMA:** British Airways will resume flights from Riyadh and Jeddah to London Heathrow from March 29 next year.

The airline will fly five times each week from both Riyadh and Jeddah to Heathrow Terminal 5. Flights to Riyadh will operate on a Boeing 777 and Jeddah flights will be on a Boeing 767.

"Resuming these flights makes commercial sense," said British Airways commercial director Robert Boyle.

# Fitness industry giant enters Bahrain market

By **SOMAN BABY**

**MANAMA:** VLCC, a world leader in the health, beauty and fitness industry, marked its debut into the Bahrain market yesterday.

The project has been established as a joint venture between VLCC Group in India and Al Fanar Investment Holding, Bahrain.

The first centre, established in Zinj at a cost of more than BD500,000, was opened yesterday by Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) chairman Dr Essam Fakhro.

Al Fanar chairman Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala said he is proud to see the centre being established as an Indo-Bahraini joint venture.

"We hope to establish around 10 VLCC centres in different parts of Bahrain," he told a Press conference at the Zinj premises.

"VLCC is a leading scientific slimming, skin and hair care brand in India, the UAE and Muscat.

"Its arrival in Bahrain will prove a great boon to our people. A recent study has revealed that more than 60 per cent of the Bahraini population



■ At the Press conference are, from left, Mr Ahuja, Mr Luthra and Mr Al Sho'ala

are either obese or overweight."

With over 150 centres and more than a million customers, VLCC has achieved an iconic status, and is easily the biggest and the most recognised wellness brand to have emerged out of the Indian sub-continent, said VLCC Group of Companies chairman and managing director Mukesh Luthra.

"To tackle the growing epidemic of obesity, which is often labelled a silent killer, VLCC has revolutionised weight loss and weight man-

agement solutions through its highly-effective scientific and safe, lifestyle modification based weight management solutions and the therapeutic approach of its beauty services," he added.

"Its unique holistic approach works without any appetite suppressants, medication, crash diets, food supplements or invasive surgeries."

VLCC employs more than 10,000 people.

At VLCC every weight-loss plan is customised, said VLCC International chief executive

officer Sandeep Ahuja.

"Every client is given a tailor-made realistic programme, which is mindful of cultural eating patterns and individual lifestyles," he said.

"In addition, every weight-loss programme is supplemented with essential body firming, toning and detoxifying therapies to help keep the skin firm and toned throughout the weight-loss process.

"Extensive research has shown that VLCC's programmes are effective in providing solutions to obesity-

related ailments and diseases in men and women of all ages," said Mr Ahuja.

Mr Luthra said VLCC opened an institute in India to offer beauty and nutrition courses four years ago.

"Currently, we have 35 campuses, which have enrolled more than 40,000 students," he said.

"We hope to open an institute in Bahrain very shortly."

In 2006, VLCC opened its first centre in the Middle East in Dubai.

The VLCC Group, a \$150m company, currently operates eight wellness centres in the UAE and one in Muscat.

The Group aims to operate 35 centres across the region by 2010.

By 2010, the company is also aiming to make its debut into the African continent in addition to the European market. The group has earmarked \$54m to fund VLCC's expansion in the region.

VLCC is the world's first slimming, fitness and beauty corporate to get the ISO 9001:2000, quality certification.

It is also the first company of its kind in the world to get the SA: 8000 (Social Accountability) certification for implementing global cor-