

Gulf Air relocates aircraft fleet to Saudi Arabia amid regional security concerns

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Gulf Air has relocated its fleet of about 11 aircraft from Bahrain International Airport to safer locations in Saudi Arabia amid escalating regional tensions.

The operation took place on March 10, during a brief window when airspace over Bahrain was temporarily reopened after remaining closed for more than a week due to security threats.

According to reports, the aircraft departed Manama in quick succession during a coordinated nighttime movement. Most of them were flown west and landed at Al-Ula International Airport in Saudi Arabia's Medina province.

The precautionary move follows rising fears of potential strikes linked to the ongoing confrontation involving Iran and military actions by the

United States and Israel. Since late February, Bahraini air defenses have reportedly intercepted multiple missiles and drones targeting sites in the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia, which has experienced comparatively fewer direct incidents, was viewed as a safer temporary location for safeguarding high-value commercial aircraft while tensions persist.

Following the relocation, Gulf Air has suspended regular commercial operations from its Manama hub indefinitely. The airline said flights will remain halted until clearance is granted by Bahrain's Civil Aviation Affairs authority.

However, the carrier is planning limited repatriation services from alternate airports in the region, including those near Dammam in Saudi Arabia, to assist stranded passengers and maintain essential travel links.

The disruption has affected regional connectivity, as Bahrain International Airport serves as an important gateway for both regional and international routes. Travelers have been advised to monitor official updates for changes to flight operations.

Aviation analysts note that the fleet evacuation reflects how rapidly geopolitical crises can disrupt civil aviation, forcing airlines to take swift measures to protect assets and ensure operational continuity.

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