

Jet charter firm founder takes over as its CEO

He quits his job as vice-president of Hotel Properties

By **VEN SREENIVASAN**

[SINGAPORE] Hotel Properties Ltd (HPL) senior executive Prithpal Singh has left his day job at the listed property group to take over at the helm of the executive jet charter company he started some two years ago.

The 55-year-old vice-president of HPL takes over as the chief executive officer of Executive Jets Asia (EJA), a company he founded in 2004, with effect from today.

The business is based at Seletar Airport.

David Ho remains as EJA's executive director.

Mr Singh, who has a commercial pilot's licence, is no newcomer to the airline and air travel business.

He has 25 years of flying experience.

He founded Region Air in 1988, as one of the region's first aircraft-leasing and air-charter companies.

He sold the company, which used a fleet of turboprops for charter services, in the mid-1990s.

For the past 17 years, he has been in HPL, where for three years he headed the Travel Bug franchise. Travel Bug operated an air charter service, flying holiday-makers to destinations including Australia, Africa and China using leased large-capacity jets.

But the business — which was effectively the region's first low-cost airline service — lasted only about three years in the mid-1990s.

In 2000, Mr Singh headed Myanmar International Airlines for a year.

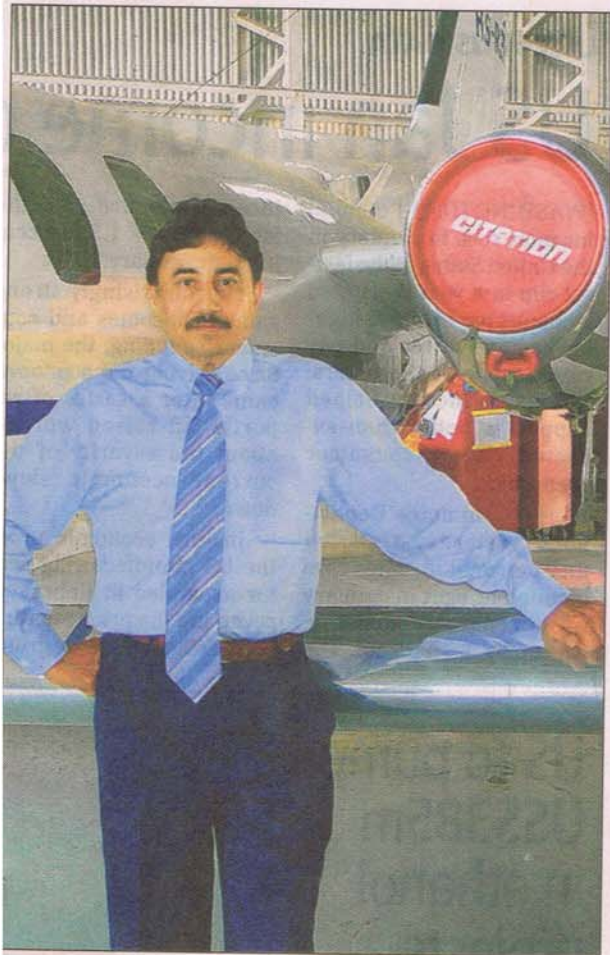
He told BT that he was

prompted to start up the executive charter jet business because of the very strong demand for such a service around the region.

"There is a huge demand for private executive jet charter service, but the supply is very tight," he said.

"We currently have three aircraft, based in Singapore, Bangkok and Jakarta, and we are looking for at least three more to meet demand. But there is a huge shortage, and we have had to look further afield to lease these planes," he said.

Demand for these six to 16-seater aircraft is particularly great among corporates which want to fly their senior executives around the region without being tied down to fixed airline schedules or subjecting the executives to the hassles of airport transfers.



Private jet-setter: Mr Singh founded Executive Jets Asia in 2004 and Region Air in 1988, which he later sold