



SHOW BUSINESS



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Arab Unity at the fore for show opening

TAILS OF THE UNEXPECTED

The inaugural Egyptian International Airshow which opens today for three days, looks all set to be a hit, with its neighbouring allies showing up in big numbers. Military aircraft from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United

Arab Emirates, in addition to the hosts, make up the bulk of the static display.

The Egyptian Air Force has a huge variety of fighters in its ranks, and so it isn't surprising, but nevertheless welcome that it is showing off a MiG-29SMT

Fulcrum, Dassault Rafale DM, F-16C Fighting Falcon fitted with conformal fuel tanks and Mirage 2000EM.

But it isn't just the combat aircraft that the EAF are exhibiting, there are also a mix of helicopters including a Kamov

Ka-52E Alligator, Leonardo AW109 and two newer AW149s one in Search and Rescue configuration, which the Italian company would not acknowledge

▶ CONTINUED ON P5



RAMPING UP FOR THE OPENING

Aircraft from the UAE, Saudi, Egypt and China all seen on the El Alamein ramp as the Egypt International Airshow gets ready to formally open today

Alan Warnes



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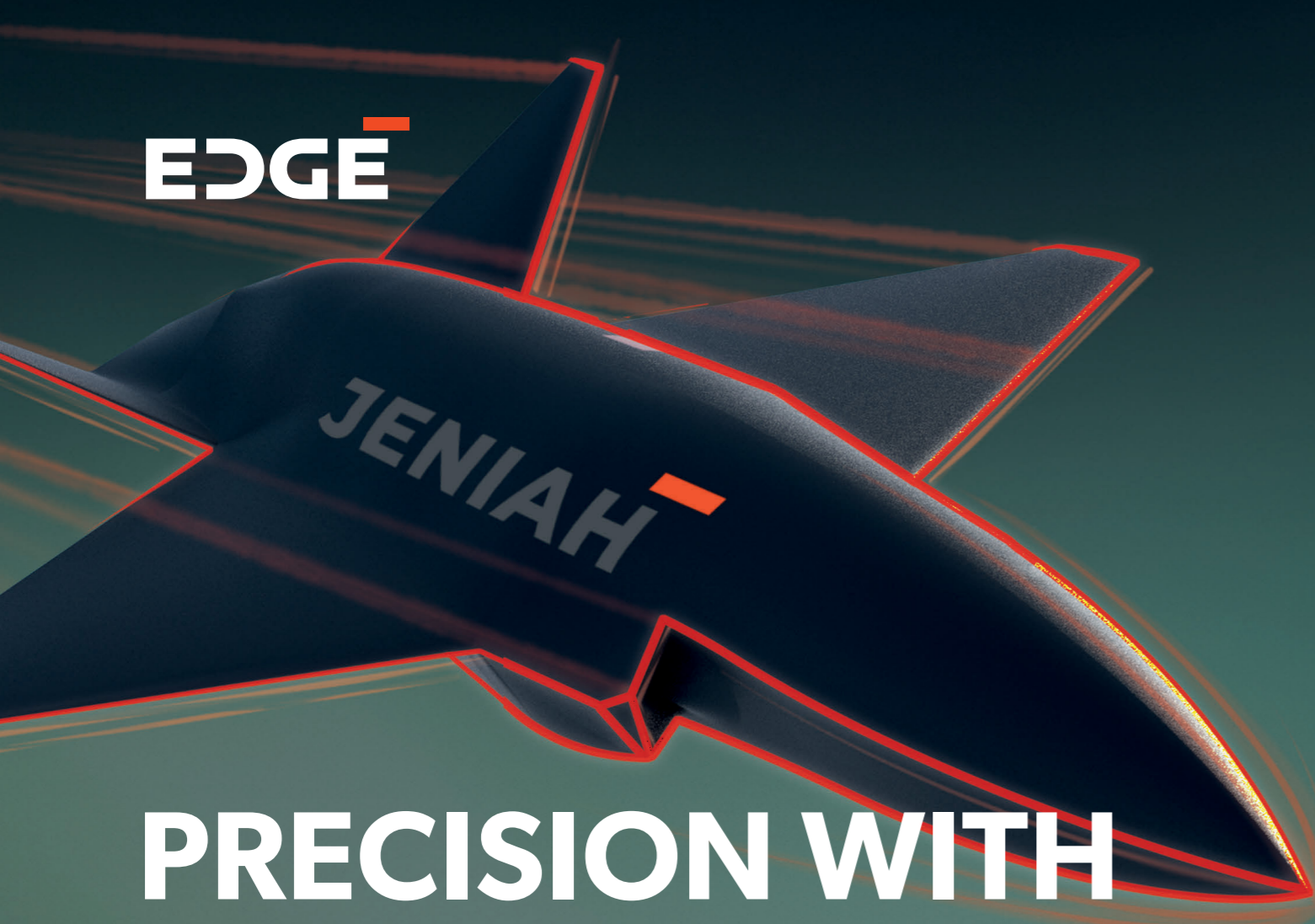
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CONTINUED FROM P1

had been sold to the North African state until recently.

Given that it's the 50th anniversary of the Qatar Emiri Air Force, it might not be too surprising to see such a large number of its assets here just as it showed off at the massive Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in the UK in July. They include a Boeing C-17A adorned in Qatar Airways markings, two Eurofighter Typhoons, a Boeing AH-64E Apache, NH-90 and Pilatus PC-24.

The United Arab Emirates sent a Mirage 2000-9, Lockheed Martin F-16E, Airbus C295W, Airbus A330MRTT, Saab GlobalEye and quite surprisingly a AT802i Archangel border patrol aircraft. The latter is also operated by the Egyptian Air force but not in the same configuration as the example present, although the 12 they operate are all ex UAEAF&AD.

Not to be outdone, the Royal Saudi Air Force have sent a F-15C

Eagle and BAE Systems Typhoon resplendent in 93rd anniversary of Saudi markings, to celebrate the creation of Saudi Arabia in 1932. A newer design is now ready to be unveiled celebrating the 94th anniversary later this month.

The Turkish Aerospace Hurjet jet trainer was also seen being put through its paces by the two-man crew during the first practice day, as did a UAEAF&AD F-16E. Two Turkish Air Force F-16C/Ds are parked close to the Hurjet.

There is also expected to be flying displays by the Hellenic Air Force, Turkish Air Force, Chinese Peoples Liberation Army Air Force and of course the Egyptian Air Force, with the Hongdu K-8E Silver Stars team which will be one of the many highlights.

Leonardo is also marketing the M-346FA fighter attack version of the jet trainer, while a T-345 which has been absent from many aerospace shows over past three years due allegedly to technical issues, is seen here



▲ Turkey's indigenous Hurjet, seen here during a practise flying display, is a possible replacement for the Egyptian Air Force's Hongdu K-8E

surrounded by potential armaments including two AIM-9 Sidewinders and additional fuel tanks.

A lot of transport aircraft arrived at El Alamein airport before the show started, with the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force Xian Y-20 being a surprise visitor.

It all adds up to a fascinating

first international airshow for Egypt and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as he opens up the world to supporting Egypt's defence industry later today. At the same time visitors will get the chance to see the burgeoning city of El Alamein on Egypt's north coast, now being developed as a major tourist attraction. ▲

Connect with the future on Honeywell's Testbed

Honeywell's flying testbed is on the El Alamein's static display



Aerospace technology giant Honeywell has flown into the show to demonstrate the future.

Military and government operators need satellite communications capabilities they can

count on when flying in contested environments and Honeywell has answered the call with satellite communications solutions ideal for en-route command and control, aeromedical, humanitarian and disaster response, head-of-state,

intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and other missions where beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) communications are absolutely required.

The Boeing 757-200 testbed has been taking its SATCOM solutions directly to customers in Europe and the Middle East.

"This has been a terrific tour that gave us the opportunity to share Honeywell's industry-leading capabilities with key customers in Europe and the Middle East," said Honeywell's Paul Page. "Having our own Boeing 757 flight test aircraft gives us the ability, which is unique in the industry, to take our technologies right to the customer's front door and demonstrate

them under real-world conditions.

"We took the opportunity to showcase the full range of Honeywell connectivity solutions," said Cook.

Among the latest technologies are Wave MCX which is designed to meet the specific needs of military and government operators for high-speed, ultra-reliable broadband connectivity.

The system can operate equally well on commercial or military high-speed Ka-band networks, which, Page said, is an enormous asset to military operators, as it supports a wide range of mission-critical applications essential for operations on the connected battlefield.



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AVIATION WEEK NETWORK

Egypt's Minister of Civil Aviation, Sameh El-Hefny talks to Alan Dron on the eve of the inaugural Egypt International Airshow about the country's soaring ambition to expand the aviation infrastructure and attract global tourism

Next steps for Egypt's aviation plans

Egypt, a pioneer in Middle Eastern aviation, is aggressively pursuing ambitious expansion plans for its airport infrastructure and airlines. As the inaugural Egypt International Airshow takes centre stage, the country aims to bolster inbound tourism and establish Cairo as a regional aviation hub. Minister of Civil Aviation, Sameh El-Hefny, highlighted the government's unwavering commitment to attracting more tourists and aviation traffic to Egypt.

He emphasised the strategic importance of encouraging tour operators and private airlines to significantly increase their airline seats, underscoring the potential for substantial growth in the sector. With 14 existing airlines, Egypt is actively incentivising further expansion within the region.

To accommodate this anticipated growth, Egypt is

investing heavily in modernising and expanding its airport infrastructure.

The government's plans include:

- Alexandria's Borg El Arab Airport: Expanding capacity from 1.2 million to 6 million passengers annually through the addition of a second terminal.
- Sphinx International Airport: Transforming this airport into a regional hub for day trips from Red Sea resorts, attracting tourists with its proximity to the Pyramids and the Grand Egyptian Museum. The airport has already doubled its hourly passenger capacity to 900.
- El Alamein Airport: Expanding capacity to 400 passengers per hour to cater to the growing tourism demand in this emerging destination.

Minister El-Hefny recently visited El Alamein Airport to assess

its operations and welcomed the launch of services by Saudi Arabian low-cost carrier flynas. The airport's strategic location and development efforts are positioning it as a key gateway for international travellers.

Egypt's aviation industry is experiencing a remarkable surge, driven by strategic expansion plans and a focus on enhancing connectivity. "The ambitious target of increasing overall airport capacity to 72.2 million passengers annually by 2025, from 66.27 million in 2023, demonstrates the country's unwavering commitment to growth and development in the aviation sector," said El-Hefny.

Egypt is spearheading efforts to enhance regional air traffic efficiency and connectivity. By exploring the integration of neighbouring Flight Information Regions (FIRs), including South Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, Egypt aims to streamline

operations and optimise airspace utilisation

Egypt's commitment to expanding its aviation footprint in Africa is evident. "The country has witnessed a surge in traffic between its airports and other African destinations, with EgyptAir serving 26 destinations across 21 African countries," El-Hefny stated. "The airline's ambitious expansion plans target reaching 32 airports in 30 African countries by 2028."

EgyptAir's strategic expansion into Africa aligns with the government's broader vision. The national carrier's hybrid subsidiary, Air Cairo, is poised to play a pivotal role in penetrating deeper into African markets, offering flexibility and tailored services.

Seeking collaborations

Egypt's rich aviation heritage and expertise extend beyond domestic operations. The government is actively seeking to collaborate with African countries in various fields, including training and knowledge sharing.

"The Egypt International Airshow serves as a catalyst for the aviation industry, attracting global participants and fostering innovation," El-Hefny explained. As El Alamein emerges as a prominent tourist destination, the government is considering rebranding the event to the El Alamein Airshow, further elevating its profile and promoting the region's tourism appeal. ▲

"The Egypt International Airshow serves as a catalyst for the aviation industry, attracting global participants and fostering innovation"

SAMEH EL-HEFNY
MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION



Egypt's Ministry of Civil Aviation

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Enhanced Durability in Egypt for Rolls-Royce

EgyptAir is looking forward to becoming one of the African carriers operating enhanced Rolls-Royce Trent 1000-powered Boeing 787s, gaining the benefit of the OEM's engine durability upgrade package which will be available in early 2025.

The carrier operates seven Trent 1000 powered 787-9s, which are the flagship of its long-haul fleet.

In 2023, Rolls-Royce CEO, Tufan Erginbilgic announced a £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) investment to upgrade all its current in-service engines, including a Durability Enhancement package for the Trent 7000 and Trent 1000 TEN.

"The Trent 1000 fleet is demonstrating fantastic in-service performance with over 99.9% dispatch reliability, but the upgrade is aimed at improving the durability of the engine," said Jason Sutcliffe, Marketing Director, Middle East, Africa & Central Asia of Rolls-Royce.

The upgrades are targeted at the most demanding sandy and hot operating environments, such as those experienced in northern Africa and the Gulf, that have caused issues leading to more frequent than expected engine removals.

"The enhancement package will more than double the time on wing of the Trent 1000 helping drive down the cost of operation for our operators," said Sutcliffe.

According to Rolls-Royce, the package employs the latest technology in analytics and design methods, specifically in turbine blade cooling design, to optimise



▲ Trent 1000 operators will see the benefit of a durability upgrade package for the engine

turbine component durability against the much higher turbine temperatures needed to deliver the fuel efficiency and durability operators require.

The engine durability upgrade takes place under the Rolls-Royce TotalCare engine maintenance agreement for in-service engines and will be applied to new-build Trents.

A second phase of Trent 1000 improvements sees Rolls-Royce developing a second durability package of 'hot section'

enhancements from 2026. "These will provide an even greater time on wing improvement, by as much as 30%," explained Sutcliffe.

EgyptAir will add the Airbus A350 to its longer-range fleet to complement the 787 in a couple of years.

At the Dubai Air Show in late 2023, EgyptAir ordered the Airbus A350-900 to bolster its widebody types as part of an expansion plan to scale up its fleet to 125 aircraft by 2028.

Announcing the Airbus order

for 10 A350s plus six options, EgyptAir Holdings chairman and CEO Yehia Zakaria said that the A350-900s will be delivered between 2025-2027. They will be powered by Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines.

In Africa, EgyptAir is one of the strongest carriers when it comes to engineering and maintenance services for Rolls-Royce engines. It has the capability to undertake the modular strip and build of Trent 700 engine that powers the Airbus A330 family. ▲

Boeing celebrates half a century of Egypt connections

Boeing has had a major presence in Egypt for more than 50 years, with the airframer being a major supplier to national carrier, EgyptAir.

The airline currently operates 41 Boeing aircraft, including seven 787-9s, six 777-300ERs and one of the region's largest 737-800 fleets.

One of the carrier's 787s is scheduled to appear at the show.

EgyptAir's reinforced its commitment with the US company at last November's Dubai Airshow, when it placed an order for 18 737-8s with lessor Air Lease Corporation.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity to engage with our Egyptian and regional partners at the inaugural Egypt International Airshow to showcase every aspect of our contribution to the aerospace ecosystem," said Kuljit

Ghata-Aura, president of Boeing Middle East, Türkiye, Africa, and Central Asia.

"We greatly appreciate our collaborative relationships with our Egyptian and regional partners and are committed to advance our joint vision for a robust and secure future in aerospace."

"The commercial market in Egypt holds immense significance for Boeing, as it represents not

only a thriving economy but also a gateway to connect people and businesses across the region," added Boeing Commercial Airplanes VP Middle East, Omar Arekat.

Boeing will also highlight its comprehensive Boeing Global Services portfolio at the show; this includes sustainment, modifications, modernisation, upgrades, training, and maintenance services.



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Smart move with ground investment

The wide range of Smart Aviation's activities is helping the Cairo-based company ride out the current wave of geopolitical unrest sweeping the region.

The company operates a fleet of executive jets, calibration aircraft and also provides ground handling at airports throughout Egypt. This variety of activities is helping smooth out shortfalls in the executive jet side of the business, which has been affected by the geopolitical problems in the region.

Smart Aviation was set up in 2007 as an offshoot of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Its initial purpose was to provide air ambulance flights – a service it still provides today.

The company's current fleet consists of five Cessna Citation 650s, which are used by everyone ranging from governmental entities to diplomats, business executives and celebrities.

The aircraft can be quickly converted for medical flights. The

aircraft have been refurbished in recent years to meet the requirements of the evolving market.

"The ongoing geopolitical problems mean that demand for some types of private jet services has declined, but not demand for other services such as air ambulance flights," said Noha Abdul Qodos, Smart Aviation's general manager, ground operations.

Smart Aviation also operates a Beechcraft 350 for airport navigation calibration work and is the sole operator of a Singapore-based Gulfstream G450 executive aircraft.

"The bulk of the company's work is Egypt-based, but it also operates bases in Saudi Arabia and Dubai," said CEO, Gen. Izzat Abdulrahman.

Complementing the aerial work, Abdulrahman said, is its ground-handling activity, which has recently received an infusion of investment: "We're not relying



▲ Smart Business: CEO Gen. Izzat Abdulrahman (right) and GM ground operations, Noha Abdul Qodos

on the aircraft business.

We've bought a whole lot of new ramp equipment this year – ground power units, water service vehicles, pushback vehicles, for example."

The company is capable of handling aircraft of up to the size of ATR and De Havilland Canada turboprops. It began its

ground-handling services at five destinations in Egypt and plans to expand to new locations.

Additionally, the company has a maintenance hub with hangarage in Cairo, with a workforce of specialised engineers and technicians, capable of handling aircraft of up to 50 tons maximum take-off weight. ▲

Chinese airlifter on show as CATIC looks for first export customer

Making a very welcome visit to El Alamein is a Peoples Liberation Air Force Xian Y-20 airlifter, as CATIC looks for a first export customer. The aircraft made its international debut in the northern hemisphere, quite surprisingly, at Zeltweg airshow in Austria in 2022.

Domestically the large transporter has revolutionised the PLAAF's airlift capabilities, and the military to support forward deployments of fighters to islands in and around the Pacific.

While there is also a Y-20 tanker version now in service, which was used to refuel the aircraft present at the show.

The main stumbling block to the Y-20 has been the engines, which still remains a problem for

the development of new aircraft in China. The Y-20 which started operational service with the 12-ton thrust Soloviev D-30KP-2 engine as an interim solution, has now been replaced by the Shenyang WS-20. In doing so it can achieve the Y-20's maximum airlift capability of 66 tons. The aircraft at EIAS is believed to have the new engines, although no one would confirm – they certainly sounded more distinctive and looked to provide more power during the ten-minute flying display.

The bulk of the Egyptian Air Force's transport capability is built up by 24 ageing C-130Hs for heavy lift and a similar number of relatively new Airbus C295s that take some of the work burden away from the Hercules.



▼ The Xian Y-20 was put through its paces during yesterday's practise run, during which it demonstrated its manoeuvrability

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EAA eyes future aviators at show

Egyptian Aviation Academy (EAA) is displaying one of its training aircraft on the static – a Beechcraft Baron G58 multi-engine trainer.

EAA is located at the 6th of October Airport in Giza. It is Egypt's oldest aviation academy.

Consisting of three faculties – Misr Flying College, the Air Traffic Control College, and the Civil Aviation Management Training College, the academy has the recognition and the approval of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of Egypt for all of its colleges as a regional training centre in Africa and the Middle East. It was the first academy to get such approval.

The academy also offers aero medical examiner certificate training – allowing graduates to have the licence to examine pilots and flight crew.

“We offer training on the Cessna 172 G1000, which is the most modern with a glass cockpit, so when they transition to the real aircraft it is exactly the same,” said Mahmoud Khattab, one of its instructors, who has clocked



Open for new recruits - Egyptian Aviation Academy's Dina Kamaleldin, Mahmoud Khattab, and Zeina Maisara

up 3,000 flying hours.

“We have 24 Cessna 172s in our fleet, as well as having Bonanzas G36.”

The academy is ‘proud’ to train female students from all over the world too.

Dina Kamaleldin recently achieved her PPL with the academy while Zeina Maisara is still in training.

“We’re proud to be here showcasing the Academy,” said Kamaleldin. “While it is the

oldest academy in the region, not many people know about the pilot training courses we offer for both men and women.”

EAA is also at the show looking for ‘good leads’ for spare parts. ▲

AIR FORCE'S COMBAT EDGE ON DISPLAY

Lined up neatly in front of the VIP area are the four fighters that shape the Egyptian Air Force's combat edge.

The multirole Rafale EM (on right) is the most modern having only been in service about six years, and the numbers will be swelled with another batch of around two squadrons expected to start arriving in 2026.

That will probably mark the

beginning of the end of the squadron of Mirage 2000EM/BMs that have been in service since 1986. The Egyptian Air Force were set to add around 30 Sukhoi Su-35s, which could have replaced them but the order was cancelled even though some of the aircraft were built and ready for delivery.

The Lockheed Martin F-16C/Ds that make up the bulk of the air defence needs, and equips the

largest number of squadrons, has the Block 52 on show with conformal fuel tanks. This is one of 20 that have been in service since 2015.

Working alongside the US and French fast jets is the Mikoyan MiG-29M/M2 Fulcrum-Es, with a dual seat MiG-29M2 making up the line. These have been operational in the air to ground role since 2020.



The EAF's combat fighter fleet is represented by Rafale EM (right), F-16C Block 52 with conformal fuel tanks (second from right), a Mirage 2000EM and MiG-29M2

UAE shows how to gain an Edge

The Middle East's largest defence conglomerate, Abu Dhabi's Edge Group, is at EIAS to showcase its dynamic and industry-leading line of smart weapons, including advanced guided-glide weapons, mission-proven precision-guided munitions, and advanced air defence missiles. The group will also showcase a range of multirole unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) tailored to meeting the region's unique security and operational requirements. As part of the UAE pavilion, Edge will display the Desert Sting family of guided-glide weapons, the Thunder and Rash lines of cost-effective precision-guided munitions, the Al Tariq range of modular, all-weather, day/night precision-guided munitions, and the rapidly deployable Skyknight inner-layer air defence missile system.

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Egypt eager for next batch of Rafales

The next batch of Dassault Rafales will start being delivered in 2026, which will bring with them several niche capabilities. Two additional contracts for a further 31 Rafales announced in May 2021, will bring the EAF's total order to 55, made up of 27 Rafale EMs and 28 Rafale DMs.

Deliveries of these next batches will be to the F3R configuration, and should be completed by the end of 2027.

The F3R comes equipped with the RBE2 AESA radar and capable of using the MBDA Meteor long range air to air missile, but the extremely capable weapon will not be sold to Egypt because of US and Israeli fears it would 'breach Israel's Qualitative Edge'.

The current fleet of 24 Rafales is easily the most modern fighter in the Egyptian Air Force's inventory, which also includes over 200 Lockheed Martin F-16 Block 40/42/52s and 50 Mikoyan MiG-29M/M2s and 17 Mirage 2000EM/BMs.

The first Rafale order was made up of 16 dual-seat DMs and eight single-seat EMs, entered service in April 2017 and by March 2023 they had chalked up 10,000 flying hours flying with No 34 Squadron/203 Tactical Fighter



Rafales have been operational in Egypt since April 2017 and are seen here flying over Egypt's most famous landmark

Dassault

Brigade at Gebel El Basur Air Base.

The deal paved the way for the rest of the French aerospace industry to get a slice of the action.

Thales which has been in Egypt since 1982 has around 500 employees in several joint ventures. Egypt was also the first export customer for the Thales Talios multifunction targeting pod, which is expected to replace the

Damocles on EAF Rafales.

Safran in June 2015 announced that a contract with Egypt would cover all three versions of the AASM Hammer now in service: hybrid inertial/GPS guidance, inertial/GPS and terminal infrared guidance, and inertial/GPS plus laser terminal guidance.

While the AASM is in EAF service it's unclear which

derivatives are operational. While MBDA has sold the Mica IR/RF air to air missiles and SCALP EG stand-off weapon to Egypt to arm the Rafales.

The supply of the latter was hindered by ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations) and delayed an additional batch of aircraft, until a solution was found in February 2021.

Turkish Aerospace Hurjet makes international debut at Show



Alan Warnes

The Hurjet is making its first international appearance at the Egyptian International Airshow ▲

The Hurjet is making its first international appearance at the Egyptian International Airshow.

The Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) twin-seat supersonic Hurjet prototype will be put through its paces during the daily flying displays. Having made its first flight on April 25, 2023, this will be the first time the new jet trainer has flown at an international event, after failing to appear at Farnborough International Airshow in July.

No reason was given for its no-show, but it transpires that the jet, serialised 24-001, was being prepared for its flight to Spain for an evaluation by the Spanish Air Force, which is considering it as a

replacement for its ageing F-5s in the lead-in fighter training role.

Just days before its departure to Spain, TAI, GE Aerospace and Turkish Engine Industries (TEI) signed a MoU to integrate the F404 powerplant into the newer Hurjet variants, as well as performing local assembly, maintenance, repair and overhaul in Turkey.

Hurjet is seen by the Turkish Air Force as an ideal replacement for its large fleet of T-38AMs in the training role, as well as supplementing some of the F-16's role. The Turkish Stars aerobatic team will also replace their Northrop F-5s.

Serial production of the Hurjet is expected to commence in 2025.

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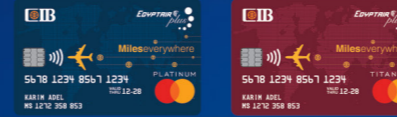
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