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Airbus celebrates with latest ACJ arrival

TwoTwenty a-plenty

Chadi Saade (right), ACJ president, and Tarek Muhiddin, chief operating officer of AMAC Aerospace, sign the paperwork for the Swiss firm to become the fifth member of the ACJ Service Centre Network of approved MROs

Airbus has got plenty to shout about at MEBAA 2024 with its ACJ220 making its show debut; a record ACJ sales year where the Middle East market is a dominant factor; and a new partner – AMAC Aerospace – joining to bring extra capacity and options to its service centre network.

On the sales front, Chadi Saade,

ACJ president, said it has eight firm ACJ orders plus three options so far in 2024, and is hoping to convert the options by the year-end.

“This will put us on track for a record year – this is an amazing achievement and great recognition from the market for Airbus overall and our products,” said Saade.

ACJ typically takes orders for 4-6

aircraft a year, he noted.

The dynamic Middle East market already forms ACJ’s largest customer base, with 60 in service across the region today, said Saade.

There are two ACJ TwoTwentys in service today, with another two in outfitting at completion centre Comlux in

▶ CONTINUED ON P5

The ACJ TwoTwenty being shown at MEBAA with Captain Serge Martinez, Airbus ACJ and Airbus Fleet Manager at Comlux – the operator of the aircraft. Comlux is the exclusive interior completion contractor with Airbus for the first 15 to enter service



Mark Pilling



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CONTINUED FROM P1

Airbus celebrates with latest ACJ arrival

the USA that will enter operation in 2025, while a further aircraft could be ready next year too, he added.

ACJ does not have a demonstration ACJ TwoTwenty, so has to charter one from its customers. "There are two extremely happy ACJ TwoTwenty owners and it's got to the point where we are struggling every time to show the aircraft," said Saade, booking it six months in advance to ensure it has one to show customers.

The aircraft here is the first ACJ TwoTwenty to be delivered and entered service in April 2023. It is based in Dubai, operated by Comlux and is owned by Five Hotels and Resorts.

The ACJ TwoTwenty has gained nine orders to date, said Saade. With this aircraft Airbus is "creating a new market". He explained how the aircraft is effectively an "extra-large bizjet" stressing its large cabin and cargo capacity, strong operating economics and airliner reliability as it competes against the top-range business jet models.

During a press briefing yesterday, Saade unveiled the latest and fifth member of the ACJ Service Centre Network of approved MROs. Saade and Tarek Muhiddin, chief operating officer of Swiss MRO and aircraft modification specialist AMAC Aerospace, signed the deal. ▲

ExecuJet to officially open DWC FBO and HQ

ExecuJet will today welcome HH Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of the Dubai Department of Civil Aviation (DCA), and chairman of Dubai Airports, to officially open its bespoke DWC FBO and regional headquarters. The expansive facility opened its doors to clients in December 2023 and has evolved over its first year of operation.

Dumani Ndebele, regional FBO director, said: "When developing the concept, we studied the region and spoke to clients about what was needed, and they have seen their suggestions come to life.

"However, what this first year's operational experience has shown us, is the growing demand for the facilities on the hotel side, which was unexpected.

"They were built 'just in case', but we now see our clients building time here into their journey plan. Speed and efficiency through the FBO is still a priority, but we now offer so much more."

The new facilities are both luxurious and extensive, with 15,000 sqm, spread over three levels offering hotel suites, spa treatments and sauna, nail salon, barber, cocktail and cigar lounge, transit lounge, conference rooms, onsite laundry and a 7,000 sqm storage hangar.

It is a careful combination of public and private, with light airy social spaces interspersed with private lounges. Ndebele said: "We are catering for business and family needs and will offer a unique kids' lounge, designed by child psychologists to be experience-based and



We now see our clients building time here into their journey plan, says Dumani Ndebele, regional FBO director

engaging. We have a high-end curated duty-free offering and an art exhibition space in partnership with Opera Gallery."

Catering to head of state flights and high-level corporate meetings, the FBO has a discrete VIP lounge adjoined by a private conference room. Ndebele added: "Clients can also board their aircraft in the hangar directly from the FBO without going outside, offering additional security and discretion."

Onsite crew rest facilities enable crew to remain in the airport, with the crew lounge adjoining the ExecuJet operations offices and five-star suites on hand.

The company still has its DXB site and will continue to offer the choice for as long as it is able. Ndebele said: "Due to the growth of both Emirates and Fly Dubai, there have been slot restrictions at DXB since October, meaning reduced availability for private aircraft. But our FBO there will continue as long as it is possible."



The expansive DWC FBO facility opened its doors to clients in December 2023 and has evolved over its first year of operation



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A purple patch for ExecuJet Satys Paint Shop

Paint the town red Or any other colour you like

ExecuJet MRO Services Middle East and Satys Aerospace have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) allowing ExecuJet to utilise the new Satys paint facility for aircraft livery services and for the two companies to explore potential joint marketing initiatives. The dedicated aircraft paint

facility at Dubai South's Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC), is due to become operational during Q1 2025.

ExecuJet MRO Services Middle East, a fully-owned subsidiary of Dassault Aviation, provides line and heavy maintenance for multiple aircraft types. The company also specialises in cabin refurbishments and frequently manages and oversees aircraft livery projects. Headquartered in France, Satys Aerospace has worked with Dassault Falcon Service for more than 20 years.

Nick Weber, regional vice president Middle East at ExecuJet MRO Services, said: "Until now, aircraft livery work has typically been sent to Europe, but with the opening of Satys' dedicated facility in Dubai we have identified a trusted local partner to keep this work in the region, with associated positive environmental impact. This will further enhance Dubai's position as a growing hub for aircraft MRO services."

Show debutant sees regional growth

Chapman Freeborn is reporting growth greater than 100 per cent in its passenger footprint across the Middle East. The company said a key component of its increase was an upsurge in demand from corporate travellers, particularly in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

"The region's thriving economy, coupled with the increasing popularity of luxury travel and seamless connectivity to global destinations, played a pivotal role in driving this growth," said Claudia Krajhanzl, VP passenger charters for Chapman Freeborn IMEA.

The company is making its debut at MEBAA and Krajhanzl said it's the 'perfect' event to participate in. "The Middle East remains a cornerstone of our global strategy, and MEBAA is the ideal platform for connecting with key industry stakeholders, corporate decision-makers, and global business travellers."

Take a trip down world-class Luxury Boulevard

As the Middle East continues to attract high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) and affluent clientele, the demand for exclusive experiences and premium offerings has never been higher and this applies to the MEBAA show.

This year, the event is introducing the Luxury Boulevard, a platform where world-class luxury brands from real estate, yachting, hospitality and lifestyle can come together with the business jet community.

Located amidst the private jet static display, visitors can engage with brands such as DarGlobal, Luxvant, Baccarat Hotel & Residences Maldives, and LovinFit.

And if visitors want a choice of travelling in luxury at sea, as well as air, Gulf Craft, one of the top seven shipyards in the world, is also exhibiting in the Luxury Boulevard, highlighting its range of boats from 32 to 175 feet.

Tim Hawes, managing director

of Informa Markets, said that Dubai's strategic location offers convenient trading hours across major global markets, boosting its appeal.

"These factors have helped solidify its position as the premier destination for high-net-worth individuals globally, with a projected net inflow of more than 6,700 millionaires in 2024 – more than any other country in the world."

Hawes said the introduction of the Luxury Boulevard made sense at this year's show and highlights the 'unique synergy' between business aviation and the luxury sector.

He said: "The last edition of the MEBAA Show welcomed an international audience of HNWIs, and this year, the Luxury Boulevard is designed to build on that success. It offers a platform where world-class luxury brands from real estate, yachting, hospitality, and lifestyle can come together with the business

jet community, creating a space for meaningful connections and collaborations."

The Luxury Boulevard is being sponsored by Falcon, which says the edition offers HNWIs attending the chance to 'discover the finest of the two worlds at one place'.

Oleg Kafarov, group director – brand marketing at Alex Investment Group, said: "The quest for excellence and the passion for innovation are at the heart of Falcon and the MEBAA Show.

"In business aviation as in luxury real estate, yachts and watchmaking, every detail counts on the path to success.

"Both in luxury workshops and in the Falcon skies, it is this incessant search to break boundaries that inspires our vision, and this is the meaning that we want to bring to this great and unique partnership between business aviation and leading luxury brands."



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Revolutionizing Business Aviation: GCAA's Game-Changing Solutions for Jet Owners and Operators in the UAE

The UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) has once again raised the bar for global aviation standards with its groundbreaking initiative aimed at transforming business aviation. Designed with the evolving needs of business jet owners and operators in mind, this visionary framework brings unmatched flexibility, efficiency, and operational ease, positioning the UAE as a global hub for excellence in aviation.



Operate with confidence, Arrive in Excellence
S e a m l e s s I n t e r a c t i o n

Establishment of the Business Aviation Advisory Council

As part of this transformative framework, the GCAA has established the **Business Aviation Advisory Council**. This council serves as a platform to address challenges, streamline processes, and promote the growth of general aviation within the UAE. By fostering collaboration between key stakeholders, the council ensures that the evolving needs of operators are met, enabling a sustainable and prosperous future for the sector.

A New Era of Ownership and Operations

One of the most revolutionary features of the GCAA's initiative is the introduction of **100% ownership rights for operators**. By eliminating the need for local partnerships, this policy empowers businesses to maintain full control over their operations. This step not only simplifies the ownership process but also redefines how global operators view business aviation opportunities in the UAE.

The process of obtaining an **Air Operator Certificate (AOC)** or **Air Operator Authorization (AOA)** has been streamlined, with approvals possible in as little as **60 to 90 days**. This rapid timeline underscores the UAE's commitment to reducing regulatory barriers and enabling swift market entry for new operators.

Flexibility in Staffing and Registration

To address staffing challenges,

the GCAA now allows operators to hire **freelance, part-time, or self-employed flight and cabin crew**, as well as instructors and examiners. This unprecedented flexibility enables businesses to scale operations dynamically without compromising compliance or quality.

In terms of aircraft registration, the GCAA has embraced a **flexible approach**, allowing the registration of aircraft regardless of age. This initiative removes traditional barriers, paving the way for operators to expand their fleets with modern and classic aircraft. Additional features, such as temporary registration for ownership transfers and seamless UAE-to-UAE aircraft transfers, ensure operational efficiency and convenience.

Holistic Support for Business Aviation

The GCAA's initiative offers a comprehensive framework covering every aspect of business aviation:

Maintenance Simplified: Operators can contract or subcontract Maintenance activities In addition to Continuing Airworthiness Management Organization (CAMO) Activities. Provisions such as pooled reliability programs, Additionally **Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC)** extensions have been created for further simplification.

Streamlined Licensing: Foreign licenses can be converted in as little as three days, with no additional exams required for validation. Operators also benefit

from local license maintenance and simplified approval for higher qualifications.

Operational Convenience: A dedicated **One-Stop Shop** and an ambassador ensure seamless, personalized interactions for all operational needs. Operators can even opt for unique registration codes, adding a bespoke touch to their fleet.

Designed for Excellence

Under the campaign slogan, "Operate with Confidence, Arrive in Excellence: Seamless Interaction," the GCAA's initiative delivers a forward-thinking framework that enhances the appeal of the UAE as a destination for business aviation. These tailored solutions empower operators to focus on growth while enjoying a streamlined and efficient experience.

Take Flight with GCAA

For business jet owners and operators, this is a transformative moment. The UAE, through the GCAA, continues to lead the charge in aviation innovation, setting global benchmarks for flexibility, cost, speed, and excellence.

Discover how these solutions can redefine your aviation operations. Contact the GCAA today to learn more and take the first step toward effortless aviation.

With the UAE at the forefront, the future of business aviation has never looked brighter.

\$80million investment in new business aviation facilities from GAMA

Sharjah's Gama to offer solution for DXB capacity crunch

The capacity crunch that is hampering business aircraft movements to destinations such as Dubai will be eased thanks to a new development from Gama Aviation at neighbouring Sharjah Airport. Pressure has been mounting since Dubai's international airport (DXB) reacted to increased demand from commercial flights and withdrew 19 hours of slots per day for business jets.

And Gama will be updating the market at the MEBA show on the progress being made with a new facility at Sharjah and its fast connections to key Dubai destinations and elsewhere in the northern emirates.

"We feel that there's always been an opportunity in Sharjah to serve the Dubai market," said Gama's UAE managing director Tom Murphy.

"We've demonstrated that over the last 10 years, but now, with the timing of that slot withdrawal, Sharjah is the closest alternative for downtown Dubai and the DIFC area, as well as supporting the northern Emirates such as Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah.

"A journey to somewhere like Dubai's downtown or the financial centre can be just 20-30 minutes from Sharjah Airport," he said.

While the new 80,000 sqm facility will add significant business aviation infrastructure to Sharjah International Airport it will also offer other benefits to ease the journey to the UAE hot spots.

Gama's Group CEO, Marwan Khalek, will be at MEBA this week to introduce the new FBO, now very much under construction, before its Q2 opening next year.

The 36,000 sqm dedicated parking apron, plus a 14,000 sqm air-conditioned hangar area, will see the company extend its MRO

capabilities and offer convenient and competitive parking for visitors or locally-based operators.

The company has been able to maintain its construction deadlines by installing its own concrete batching plant on site.

"We've just finished building our new taxiway dedicated just for our site," Murphy said. "And that's going to deliver a 90-second to two minutes taxi to the runway from the parking area. And I think that's a rarity to find at an international airport these days."

Dedicated fuel bowsers on the apron will also make delays for fuelling a thing of the past. There are no slot restrictions either.

Customs and immigration services located in the VIP lounge will enable passengers to speed through to their waiting cars.

The lounge itself is comprised of a quiet area, central lounge and

an observation bar. Each area has been carefully appointed to cater for the needs of individuals as well as family groups.

The quiet area, using floor-to-ceiling sliding panels provides either a private space or is opened as part of the wider lounge space.

Uninterrupted views

A raised observation bar will provide uninterrupted views of the apron with speciality refreshments, including a wide selection of juices curated to match the time of day.

With 40 years of experience Gama has applied that knowledge to the new design.

"We have spent a good deal of time benchmarking other FBOs around the world to create a facility that is focused on providing a highly-personalised experience to our guests whether they transition directly to their aircraft or spend

a few minutes enjoying our hospitality," Murphy said.

"This same focus has been applied to the flight crew. The importance of good crew rest is paramount to flight safety and again we have tried to ensure their experience is balanced for short or long stopovers."

Gama Aviation is also building a new FBO facility in Jersey on Britain's Channel Islands.

Khalek said: "We are investing in FBO facilities that are designed to offer a tailored experience to discerning clients who wish to travel with the utmost privacy."

"Our total investment in these new build facilities in Sharjah and Jersey will exceed \$80million, creating an entirely new business aviation infrastructure that is designed to service the current and future needs of our clients, their aircraft and their flight crews." ▲

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BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE
Gama Aviation's managing director Tom Murphy in front of the foundations of the company's latest FBO in Sharjah

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BizAv Talks make a comeback

A highlight of this year's show is the return of BizAv talks, which debuted at MEBAA in 2022. More than 55 executives and innovators will take to the stage to delve into the strategic trajectory of business aviation in the Middle East and beyond.

Building on its previous success, BizAv Talks provides a "platform for critical conversations" according to conference chair Abhishek Sengupta. He emphasised the importance of collaboration among industry leaders and innovators to explore key trends shaping business aviation globally and regionally.

He also noted the dominance of three key markets in the Middle East's business aviation sector: the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. "For the 12 months from September 2023 to September 2024 Turkey recorded nearly 28,000 business aviation departures (a 106 per cent increase from five years ago), the UAE saw close to 16,000 flights (a 230 per cent surge) and Saudi Arabia logged over 14,000 (a 144 per cent increase). The conference, Sengupta noted, "will help uncover the factors driving this demand, address existing gaps and spotlight new opportunities".

Running from December 10-12, conference discussions will revolve around three key themes, including: The next frontier of business aviation, driving a sustainable future and the business of business aviation.

Agenda highlights include session such as "What has changed in the evolving BizAv landscape?", which will focus on fleet management priorities and adapting to emerging business models, as well as a 'sustainability dialogue' addressing pathways to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Panels will also explore the future of luxury aviation, the evolution of emerging business models and innovations in VVIP jet customisation.

Additionally,



a session dedicated to leveraging data-driven insights for operational excellence reinforces the conference's emphasis on actionable strategies.

Patrick Hansen, CEO of Luxaviation Group, emphasised the role of collaboration among operators and OEMs in navigating the sector's challenges. "As we navigate an evolving landscape – driven by sustainability goals, alternative fuels and changing customer demands – it is crucial to explore how these partnerships are fostering innovation," he remarked.

The stellar line-up of speakers includes Chadi Saade, president of Airbus Corporate Jets; Jenny Lau, chair of the Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA) and founder and vice chair of Sino Jet; Kurt Edwards, director general of IBAC, Walid Alrahmani, assistant DG strategy and international affairs at the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority; and Kennedy Ricci, president of 4Air.

Discussions on global environmental goals will explore the availability of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), increasing production and supply in the region and strategies to make SAF more cost-effective for operators.

Exclusive access to industry reports throughout the conference will also provide

attendees with data-driven insights and valuable perspectives that are set to redefine the sector.

The rapid rise of Saudi Arabia's aviation market will also be integral to discussions as regional industry leaders highlight strategic shifts driving this growth. Capt. Khalid Alnatour, CEO of Aloula Aviation, will look at the role of the regulator in infrastructure development as well as the potential for emerging technologies, maintenance concerns and service quality.

In addition, the integration of advanced air mobility solutions like eVTOLs and data-driven management innovation will be key topics, providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics in Middle Eastern business aviation.

Sengupta hopes the conference sessions will enlighten delegates with valuable insights into the complex factors shaping the business aviation landscape and comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics in Middle Eastern business aviation.

"A range of elements come into play – from geopolitics, fluctuating oil prices and environmental goals, to the growing number of ultra-high-net-worth individuals in the region. Beyond its traditional role, private aviation serves diverse purposes, including humanitarian missions, medical repatriation, surveillance operations and shaping the future of flight. It's essential that we advocate for the sector and amplify its significance on the global stage." ▲

ASM expanding into Saudi Arabia

Longstanding MEBAA exhibitor Aviation Services Management (ASM) sees good prospects for growth in 2025 as it expands into Saudi Arabia and adds a new aircraft to its fleet.

The Dubai-based company handles the many ground-based services that are essential to getting flights off the ground, such as flight planning, obtaining permit clearances, providing fuel and ground handling. It handles both airline and private jet clients.

It also has its own corporate jet arm, ASM Aero. It has recently added a Bombardier Challenger 605 to its two Lear Jet 60XR and anticipates that the new aircraft will significantly expand its reach. The Lear Jets have a range of 2,040nm /3,775km, whereas the Challenger can stretch its legs to almost double that figure – 3,700nm / 6,580km.

The new aircraft brings London or Nairobi within range – both destinations frequently requested by clients.

Most of ASM Aero's clients are business executives, but it also handles many medevac flights and the urgent movement of human organs. India and Singapore are frequent destinations for clients seeking medical operations, according to ASM founder and CEO Vito Gomes.

Around 35 per cent of ASM's business involves flights to and from Saudi Arabia, and the company opened an office in Riyadh eight months ago. "We're looking to base one of our aircraft there, probably in a few months' time," Gomes said.

Even in the world of corporate jets, however, clients are taking a closer look at spending less money: "In the past, people were not looking at cost for a charter or service. In today's market, they're looking for a more cost-effective way of doing this."



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The region's business aviation market is growing in fleet, infrastructure, technology and flight hours, reports Lee Ann Shay

Is Middle East business aviation slowing at all?

Business aviation flight hours were up 6.9% year-over-year in the first three quarters of 2024

Entrepreneurs and capitalists are “following the money” and landing in the Middle East and North Africa – particularly the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, two of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Governments in the region are proactively diversifying into various vertical markets, including aviation, and fostering business-friendly practices.

This has buoyed business aviation and is turning Dubai, which has heavily invested in its aviation infrastructure over the years, into a prominent global aviation hub.

- Fleet size, infrastructure and technology are growing.
- Long-range and ultra-long-range aircraft dominate.

“The Middle East is uniquely positioned to capitalise on several opportunities, particularly due to its strategic location as a global hub for business and tourism,” says Ali Alnaqbi, executive chairman of the Middle East and North Africa Business Aviation Association.

“This, combined with the robust economic growth and increasing number of high-net-worth individuals, continues to drive demand for business aviation.”

The region's growing fleet and flight hours demonstrate this. Business aviation flight hours were up 6.9% year-over-year in the first three quarters of 2024, according to *Aviation Week* Network's Fleet Discovery and Tracked Aircraft Utilisation data.



During that period, large jets generated 67% of flying hours, with medium and small jets contributing 28% and turboprops 6%. Bombardier Global Express and Global 7500/8000 aircraft as well as Gulfstream G650 aircraft posted the most flight hours. Long-range and ultra-long-range aircraft dominate both the Middle East's existing fleet of about 800 aircraft and forecast deliveries over the next decade.

Notably, according to *Aviation Week* data, while flying hours in the region increased 6.9% year over year in the first three quarters of this year, they were 61.2% higher compared with the same period in 2019.

Investing

Mark Butler, CEO of Dubai-based aircraft dealership Action Aviation, deals mostly with long-haul jets because the majority of his clients want to fly to Europe or China. “The issue we have is the availability of aircraft and the availability of financing,” he says. “There are a lot more buyers out there than banks realise. There is massive growth, but it's just not being tapped [across the Middle East, India and Turkey].”

Butler expects the region to see the biggest growth. “In the next five years, it's going to be really exciting,” he says.

Gulfstream aircraft dominate Action Aviation's activities, but Butler says he sees clients “starting to turn toward [Boeing Business Jets] and [Airbus Corporate Jets] because they want the luxury and space that goes with it,” noting that many of the company's customers travel with large families.

Butler adds that aircraft manufacturers “are missing a trick” and should “concentrate on the region because many aircraft owners like to purchase new aircraft.” If they were to allocate more new aircraft delivery slots to the region instead

of the U.S., the world's largest business aviation market, “they would sell more,” he suggests.

To support the region's growing fleets, several maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) or flight service companies have recently opened or will open in the near future. MRO space in particular is tight, which is a trend around the world. Russians have reportedly parked more than 100 business jets in Dubai since Western sanctions against Moscow took effect – several are stored in hangars clogging space.

Dassault last year relocated ExecuJet MRO into a 149,500-ft² facility at Al Maktoum International Airport, the UAE's dominant business aviation airport. Dassault aims for ExecuJet to gain space and consolidate workshops and hangars under one roof; it was split between two buildings at its former site.

The Mohammed bin Rashid Aerospace Hub at Dubai South, where Al Maktoum is located, plans to break ground this year on five new hangars mostly dedicate to maintenance, including one for UUDS Aero, an interior completions center for private jet company Midline Aviation.

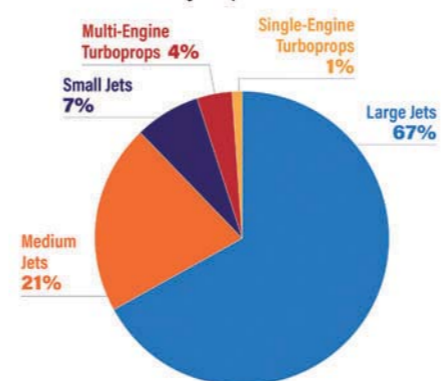
Bombardier plans to open a new service center in Abu Dhabi in the near future.

Directional Aviation Principal Kenn Ricci told *Aviation Week* on the sidelines of Corporate Jet Investor Miami that Flexjet, its aircraft fractional ownership company, plans to open in the Middle East in 2025. “We're going to start with flight service, [but] we've always vertically created the infrastructure,” he said, so the company might add a hangar for climate-controlled protection. ▲

Note: This article first appeared in the 25 November to 8 December 2024 issue of *Aviation Week & Space Technology*.

Business Aviation Flying Hours in the Middle East and North Africa

January-September 2024



Note: Countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Sources: Aviation Week Intelligence Network Fleet Discovery and Tracked Aircraft Utilization

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Falcon's finest makes show debut

A thousand hours roadshow under its belt as the 6X homes in on Middle East, writes Alan Peaford

Dassault Aviation's Falcon 6X ultra-long-range jet makes its MEBAA debut this week and is already receiving a lot of interest from customers in the region.

The French widebody aircraft has been winning acclaim during a 1,000 hour, world tour throughout the year. The aircraft, which achieved type certification by the FAA and EASA in 2023, is fulfilling deliveries following completions at the company's Little Rock, Arkansas, facility.

The Falcon 6X, the largest aircraft in Dassault's fleet, was reborn from the impressive, but ill-fated, Falcon 5X twinjet, which was launched in 2013 and made its first flight in 2017. The project was ultimately abandoned due to ongoing difficulties with its Safran Silvercrest engines.

Back to the drawing board and maintaining some of the 5X attractions – the skylight window to brighten up the galley area for one – Dassault launched the stretched version – the Falcon 6X – with Pratt & Whitney Canada

PW812D turbofan engines. It made its first flight in March 2021 and was certificated in August 2023. With a few extra refinements the first production aircraft entered service literally a year ago.

The 6X figures speak for themselves. It has a maximum range of 5,500 nm at Mach 0.80 or 5,100 nm at Mach 0.85 with a maximum operating speed of Mach 0.90. The aircraft, which can be configured to hold 12-to-16 passengers, features a cabin height of 6 ft. 6 in. (1.98m), a width of 8 ft. 6 in. (2.59m), and a cabin length of 40 ft. 4 in. (12.29m). Options include an extended entryway and galley, a crew rest area and spacious rear stateroom. The 6X includes 30 extra-large windows.

Exceptional

Dassault's chairman and CEO Eric Trappier describes the 6X as "exceptional".

The city pairs are impressive as, because of the short take-off and landing capabilities, it can fly almost anywhere in the world and land at airports that are typically

inaccessible to large business jets because of short runways or challenging approaches.

"Operators in the Middle East highly value the performance, flexibility, robustness and technological excellence of large cabin models like the Falcon 6X and 8X, which draw heavily on decades of Dassault fighter aircraft experience," said Trappier.

Pilot-friendly

Although certified for 19 passengers, Dassault will typically expect 12-16 passengers to fly in the 6X making the most of the three lounge areas with can feature a number of configurations.

Another bonus for typical Middle Eastern flights is the 155 cubic feet (4.38m³) baggage area. Falcons have always been rated as being pilot-friendly and the 6X builds on this. The flight crew will use Dassault's fourth-generation Enhanced Avionics System (EASy) IV flight deck, which is based on Honeywell's Primus Epic integrated avionics system.

Specific features of that avionics

system include the FalconEye combined vision system (CVS) and the FalconSphere II electronic flight bag (EFB), with the former system – which is standard – featuring the first head-up display (HUD) that can combine "into a single view" terrain imaging that is "synthetic [and] database-driven" with "actual thermal and low-light camera images."

Furthermore, the 6X's flight-control system – the digital flight control system (DFCS) – is said to harmonise control inputs around the aircraft's three axes, augmenting pitch and roll dampening, as well as yaw stability.

The DFCS controls "all flight control surfaces", and the incorporation of the nose-wheel steering into the DFCS makes control on the ground "smoother" and allows for greater precision in runway tracking. The aircraft can be found on the static park opposite chalet A24. ▲

The 8X is also on show at MEBAA following its successful outing at DWC two years ago.

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CTT giving cabins a breath of fresh air

A cabin climate is more dehydrating than any place on Earth, but CTT helps combat this with its product, The Humidifier Onboard.

“To put in context just how dehydrated you get while flying, the desert and the Arctic have 10 per cent more humidity than a first or business-class cabin,” said Peter Landquist, the company’s VP sales and marketing.

“On a flight, your mucus membranes are affected. Once these are dried out you can suffer a cold. This can be particularly the case towards the front of the cabin. So, when you travel in premium class, you might want to sleep and therefore drink less water and will awaken to feel sluggish.

“The Humidifier Onboard solves this VIP paradox. Transforming the inflight climate to regain support for wellness and well-being. Without a reliable and efficient

onboard humidification system, the benefits of flying premium and/or private will be diminished. Instead of arriving with a body and immune system that suffers from dehydration, significantly better humidity transforms and elevates the experience into pure serenity. A humidification system is a small step in terms of equipment, but a huge step for wellness and well-being.”

He added: “In all its simplicity, it is an intangible but significant upgrade. Premium/ VIP travellers feel better, sleep better, and have a better sense of taste. They arrive more ready to go and are less impacted by jet lag. We believe over the next 10 years it will grow into a standard also on airline passenger cabin for long-haul aircraft. No one wants to compromise on their health and immune system.”

The Swedish company, which is at the show, has also started to



Breathe easy: Peter Landquist, CTT VP sales and marketing

develop a cabin humidification system for large cabin business jets.

“We are very proud that Airbus Corporate Jets is offering our product for the ACJ220, 319, 320 and now also the ACJ330-800/900neo aircraft. We can also offer our customer a volatile organic compounds (VOC) filter integrated in the humidifier,” said Landquist.

Partners study Saudi Arabian SAF production

Saudi Arabia’s giant oil producer Aramco, France’s TotalEnergies and Saudi Investment Recycling Company (SIRC) have announced the signing of a joint development and cost sharing agreement (JDCSA) to assess the development of a sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) production unit in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This collaboration will draw on the expertise of the three partners to develop a SAF production unit by converting local residues from the circular economy, such as used cooking oil and animal fats. SIRC collects and adds value by converting these materials into sustainable products in Saudi Arabia.

The agreement was signed last week during the visit of French president Emmanuel Macron to Saudi Arabia, and in the presence of his royal highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud, Saudi minister of energy.

Amin Nasser, Aramco president and CEO, said: “With demand for air travel forecast to grow, it’s becoming imperative to address aviation emissions through lower-carbon alternatives such as sustainable aviation fuels.

“Addressing transport emissions requires a wide range of approaches and Aramco is pursuing a number of potential innovative solutions, as we seek opportunities to make an impact. As Saudi Arabia’s tourism and aviation sectors expand, this could potentially benefit both domestic and international airlines,” said Nasser.

Patrick Pouyanné, chairman and CEO of TotalEnergies, said: “Saudi Arabia is emblematic of our multi-energy strategy aimed at supporting the energy transition of oil- and gas-producing countries. This SAF production project contributes to the country’s green initiative and Vision 2030’s objectives.”

“The new partnership with Aramco and TotalEnergies to assess the feasibility of a renewable aviation fuels plant signifies a major leap forward in our mission,” noted eng. Ziad Al-Sheha, CEO of SIRC.

Empire strikes back with new Dubai South facility



2024 has been an exceptional year for Empire Aviation, says Dhamecha

Over the last 12 months, Empire Aviation has added four aircraft to its management fleet, and its founder and managing director Paras P. Dhamecha, said the company expects to maintain this momentum with an announcement at the show this week

The company operates one of the Middle East’s most extensive managed fleets of business jets, with its fleet currently comprising 25 aircraft.

It holds air operator certificates (AOCs) in the UAE and San Marino, and operates in the key regions for private aviation, covering the USA, Europe, India, Africa and Indonesia, in addition to the Middle East.

“2024 has been an exceptional year for Empire Aviation and we see exciting times ahead both for the Middle East and other markets, where we have several new projects in the pipeline,” said Dhamecha.

“We see sustained international interest in all our services from various sectors, including individuals and families, corporates, and government entities.

“Empire Aviation works globally, but our roots are in Dubai and the UAE, where we are currently developing a new corporate facility at the Mohammed bin Rashid Aerospace Hub (MBRAH) at Dubai South.

“It’s not just about physical infrastructure – Dubai and the UAE are also investing in the essential regulatory framework and ecosystem of partners and talent vital to supporting the vision to make Dubai the aviation capital of the world.

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WHERE THE FUTURE OF AEROSPACE MEETS



Gulfstream raises the bar for business jets

With more than 120 aircraft based in the region and 40 per cent growth over the last decade, business jet manufacturer, Gulfstream, is showcasing its G700 at this year's event.

Scott Neal, Gulfstream's senior vice president of worldwide sales, highlighted the ultra-large-cabin jet's exceptional performance since entering service in April, noting it is "consistently exceeding customer expectations".

Since its launch, the G700 has achieved more than 65 city-pair speed records, setting new benchmarks in efficiency and speed. "It has raised the bar for performance, innovation and comfort," added Neal.

Also on display at the show is Qatar Executive's G700, Gulfstream's first international customer for the model. Configured to seat 13 passengers and accommodate eight sleeping spaces, the aircraft "redefines bespoke private and business aviation", according to Qatar Executive.

Neal underlined that the G700's high speed and long range are ideal for local operators, seamlessly connecting them with other global hubs. Equipped with Rolls-Royce Pearl 700 engines it has a range of 7,750nm and can connect Dubai to New York at Mach 0.87 with a maximum speed

of Mach 0.935, the fastest in the Gulfstream fleet.

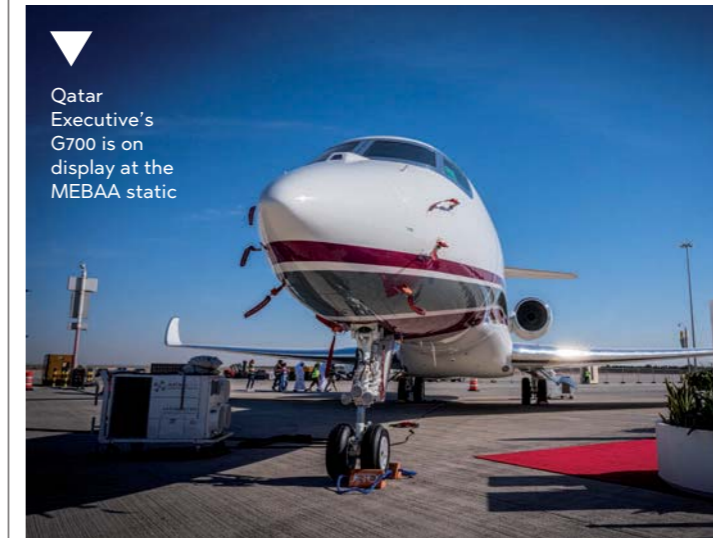
Renowned for its spacious cabin – the largest in business aviation – the G700 offers up to five configurable living areas. It can accommodate up to 19 passengers and provides sleeping space for up to 13. Notable interior features include the exclusive ultra-galley with more than 10 feet of counter space, award-winning seat designs, and Gulfstream's signature cabin experience, delivering 100 per cent fresh air, whisper-quiet noise levels, abundant natural light, and a low cabin altitude for maximum passenger comfort.

It is also equipped with advanced

technology to enhance safety and operational efficiency, including the Symmetry flight deck. This system features the industry's first active control side-sticks, a data concentration network, and extensive touch-screen interfaces.

The aircraft also features a predictive landing performance system and dual head-up displays featuring Gulfstream's combined vision system (CVS), which merges enhanced flight vision system (EFVS) and synthetic vision system (SVS) for improved pilot situational awareness and expanded airport accessibility.

Gulfstream's G500 and G600 are also on display.



Qatar Executive's G700 is on display at the MEBA static



RSI's CEO John Pagano and Jetex CEO Adel Mardini sign, as RSI's Michael White looks on

Jetex touches down in Saudi

Daa International has named Dubai-based FBO operator, Jetex, as the exclusive operator of Red Sea International (RSI) Airport's private aviation terminal.

The agreement marks Jetex's first significant venture into the Saudi market and will see Jetex providing all aspects of private jet handling, including managing the private terminal, aircraft turnarounds and concierge services. It will also offer luxury electric airport transfers in line with the destination's sustainability priorities.

Describing his excitement at Jetex's first venture in Saudi Arabia, Adel Mardini, founder and CEO of Jetex said: "In collaboration with both Daa International and Red Sea Global, we aim to transform the airport into a top-tier destination that resonates with the most discerning international and domestic travellers."

RSI's terminal, which includes the dedicated private aviation terminal operated by Jetex, is set to open fully in 2025.

Zenon eyes robust Middle East recruitment market



The Middle East business aviation sector has seen significant growth, with increasing demand for skilled professionals – says Andrew Middleton

Aviation recruitment firm Zenon is leveraging growth in the Middle East's aviation sector with an influx of start-up companies in the UAE and wider region requiring a raft of qualified personnel.

"The business aviation sector, particularly in the Middle East, has seen significant growth, with increasing demand for skilled professionals, from sales directors and brokers to corporate jet pilots," said Andrew Middleton, CEO, Zenon, adding that "demand for personnel is outweighing supply".

The company has been actively recruiting in the Middle East since 2006 with clients

including Gama Aviation, Royal Jet and DC Aviation. "Competitive salaries and an attractive lifestyle make the Middle East a sought-after destination for top talent," said Middleton.

In response to demand, Zenon's recruitment model has evolved to include interim management and contracted professionals, reflecting industry demands.

With the future of aviation recruitment in the region remaining promising, driven by a burgeoning market and increasing client needs, Zenon is now looking to open a base in the UAE.

MD Onboard taking pulse of inflight telemedicine

Aviation medical solutions provider MD Onboard has entered a partnership with Laerdal to enhance its medical training for the aviation industry.

Together, they will integrate advanced simulation technology into training programmes designed to enable cabin crew and aviation professionals to manage inflight medical incidents with greater confidence, leveraging immersive realistic training experiences that replicate inflight medical incident scenarios.

“We’re dedicated to pushing the boundaries of inflight medical care and training. Our partnership with Laerdal combines our real-world aviation expertise with their ground-breaking simulation technology, elevating our training to a new level,” said Wehda El Aridi, chief growth

officer of MD Onboard.

“Together, we’re setting a new benchmark for aviation health and safety, delivering innovative, technology-driven solutions that will empower crew members to handle critical medical situations with confidence.”

The company has also chosen MEBAA to announce its advances in telemedicine technology.

“We empower flight crews with real-time medical advisory services,” explained El Aridi. “These advanced solutions provide immediate access to expert medical guidance, ensuring safety and peace of mind for passengers and crew.”

“From seamless integration with aviation systems to a user-friendly interface for medical decision-making, we are disrupting traditional inflight healthcare norms. By reducing unnecessary diversions



DUMMY RUN
MD Onboard is pushing the boundaries of inflight medical care and training

and improving resource efficiency, these innovations set a new benchmark for operational excellence and cost savings.”

The company’s CEO Grant Jeffrey was recently appointed to the board of directors of the Asian

Business Aviation Association (AsBAA).

Jeffery said: “This role provides an opportunity to work closely with industry leaders to drive meaningful advances in aviation health and safety.”

Archer takes aim at UAE with eVTOLs

Establishing Abu Dhabi and the UAE as a world leader in electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) air taxi operations has moved closer, with an agreement on Friday between Abu Dhabi organisations and US aircraft manufacturer Archer Aviation.

The agreement positions eVTOL builder Archer as the first in Abu Dhabi – and the wider MENA region – to establish manufacturing capabilities. It also aims to formalise co-operation between UAE and Abu Dhabi stakeholders

in preparation for the scheduled launch of the first commercial eVTOL flights next year.

The air taxi flights will use Archer’s Midnight aircraft. Last month, Archer and the UAE regulator, the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) held a week-long workshop to establish the necessary regulatory framework to certify the Midnight and approve commercial air taxi operations in the UAE.

The Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) will facilitate coordination among Abu Dhabi entities

in preparation for the launch of commercial operations.

Parties to the agreement include Abu Dhabi Airports, Falcon Aviation Services, Etihad Aviation Training, the GCAA, Global Air Navigation Services, Global Aerospace Logistics and the Integrated Transport Centre.

The collaboration outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party and lays the foundation for definitive agreements between Archer and the commercial stakeholders.



Signing the agreement

Business Wire

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF VOO first...

B2B marketplace provider VOO Flights is showcasing a new business aviation charter flight booking tool that it claims is the world’s first global distribution system (GDS) for business aviation. The product has been developed and launched in collaboration with Insignia Group, the payment services and luxury lifestyle management firm.

VOO says the VOO Flights API is designed for “tech brokers” who want to offer their end customers a premium booking experience while tapping into the robust functionalities of the VOO Flights Marketplace.

“Since our launch in 2022, we have onboarded operators and continuously expanded the VOO portfolio for our charter brokers,” said Robert Plhak, CEO of VOO Flights. “This transition takes us from a simple B2B booking platform to the first GDS for business aviation, which changes everything.”



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ABOUT MEBAA

The Middle East and North Africa Business Aviation Association (MEBAA), is the official representative of the business aviation industry in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. MEBAA is a non-profit association and a member of the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), established in 2006 with the mission to provide a platform for members of the business aviation industry in the MENA region to gather, understand and communicate the needs and benefits of the industry.

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