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AT YOUR SERVICE BOMBARDIER AFTERMARKET INVESTMENT FOR UAE

Bombardier announced a new major investment for customer support in the UAE at MEBAA yesterday. The Canadian OEM announced the official ground-breaking of a new service centre to be built at Abu Dhabi International Airport.

Bombardier has been operating a line maintenance centre in Dubai for the past two years but, with the growth in the region, has now opted to build its first full-service facility in the region.

At full capacity, the facility will

add more than 100 aerospace jobs in the community and is targeted to open in 2025. It will feature a large hangar, comprehensive parts depot and a complete suite of maintenance services, including scheduled and unscheduled heavy maintenance, aircraft modifications, paint modification, aircraft-on-ground (AOG) capabilities, and aircraft parking services.

Speaking at the show yesterday, Chris Debergh, Bombardier's vice president and general manager parts and services, said the Dubai

line station had seen increased business as the number of approvals had grown. "But for the heavies, they have been going to Europe, Singapore or even the US. Now Abu Dhabi will be able to take up that work."

Dynamic Financial Hub

The new facility will fit up to four Global 7500 aircraft – and will also be able to service the Bombardier flagship of a new era, the Global 8000, when it enters service in 2025.

"The Middle East is an important market for Bombardier with more than

150 aircraft, and we are pleased to be establishing a highly efficient facility in the UAE for our customers in the market – and for those visiting from around the world," said Éric Martel, president and CEO, Bombardier.

"Abu Dhabi is a dynamic financial hub for business and commerce in the UAE, and this service facility will provide significant benefits, quick aircraft turnarounds, and OEM peace of mind to our growing customer base. We are also thrilled to be providing new, high-paying aerospace jobs in the community." ▲



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We are pleased to be establishing a highly efficient facility in the UAE – Chris Debergh, Bombardier

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Ground-breaking new Tupan cargo drone unveiled

Brazilian cargo drone developer, Tupan, has used MEBAA to unveil its high-speed, vertical/short take-off and landing (HSVTOL) aircraft.

Designed for a range of civil and military missions, the first iteration in the family of drones is the Tupan 300 RC VTOL, a scaled-down model of the larger Tupan-1000 cargo, which is currently undergoing flight-testing in São José dos Campos. This can be used either as a radio-controlled model aircraft or a training drone for the larger variant.

The all-electric Tupan 300 is powered by four individually adjustable electric blowers and has a flight autonomy of three minutes in VTOL and 20 minutes in cruise, with a maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of 25kg.

Tupan is working on engine test-

ing of the larger -1000 and hopes to bring the drone to market by the middle of 2024.

"We are offering a new kind of cargo delivery, using high-speed, door-to-door aerial transport over long distances," said Alberto Pereira, CEO and partner at Tupan Aircraft. "This is disruptive technology; there is nothing like this in the market today. It goes further and faster than other drones."

"It has not been easy but we have overcome many challenges."

The company, which is backed by undisclosed investors in Brazil, is seeking funding from new investors in the Middle East.

Pereira said this could result in production of the Tupan drone moving from Brazil to the UAE.

The -1000 will have a 140kg payload, while the largest variant,

the Tupan -3000 will be configured to carry loads of up to 600kg, with a cruising speed of 850km/h and a range of 1,200km.

Four turbofan engines will power the larger cargo drones, with four more battery-powered electric propulsion systems designed to aid control at low speed during take-off and landing, which will be recharged during the cruise.

"I describe it as a flying squirrel, because it has four arms, a lifting body, and it can fly long distances," said Nehemias Lacerda, head of aerodynamics at Tupan.

Each drone will have a range of uses, from parcel delivery to agriculture and oil platform transportation. Search-and-rescue missions, fire-fighting and military evacuation from a battlefield are also possible uses.



Falcon draws a VIP crowd

It is said that falcons will always draw a crowd in the Middle East – and HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president, Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, chairman, Dubai Airports, and chairman and chief executive, Emirates Airline Group, certainly looked impressed with the Dassault Falcon 8X as he toured the show with MEBAA chairman Ali Alnaqbi yesterday. The guest of honour met exhibitors in the hall and on the static display line and paid tribute to the importance of business aviation to the UAE's growing aviation sector. Some 95 countries are represented at the show – the largest ever international contingent in the event's history.



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ECFT to deploy new flight simulator

Emirates-CAE Flight Training (ECFT) announced at MEBAA yesterday that it is enhancing its business aviation training offering with the deployment of a new Global 6500 full-flight simulator (FFS) in May at its Al Garhoud centre.

The announcement comes as Emirates and CAE celebrate the 20th anniversary of their partnership and the establishment of ECFT in Dubai.

“ECFT’s success is a testament to the strong partnership Emirates and CAE have developed over the past 20 years,” said Nick Leontidis, CAE’s group president, civil aviation. With the deployment of the new Global 6500 FFS, we are securing ECFT’s reputation for delivering the most advanced business aviation training in the region.”

Steve Allen, executive vice president at Emirates Group, added: “Our consistent investment in infrastructure demonstrates our commitment to providing world-class aviation training in Dubai. The addition of another, advanced

full-flight simulator to our offering further strengthens our position as one of the world’s leading flight training service providers. We look forward to continuing our successful partnership with CAE.”



▲ Sweet success: From left: Camille Mariamo, Captain Bader Al Marzooqi, Nimrod Meuleman, and Nick Leontidis celebrate with a macaron tower!

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Business aviation sets its sights on Bodrum

Given its strategic location as the crossroads between Europe and Asia, an increasing number of high-net-worth individuals are turning their attention to Turkey as a base for their businesses.

This, coupled with the growing popularity of the Turkish Riviera as a leisure destination for wealthy individuals from across the Middle East and north Africa, has seen the private aviation community calling for a dedicated business aviation event to be co-located with the Bodrum Airshow in September 2023.

Milas-Bodrum Airport, which has seen a steady increase in business aviation in recent years, will be the host airport for the show.

Call me a taxi! Voo aiming for an Uber vibe with online booking platform

A new digital marketplace described as the “Uber for business aviation” that allows customers to search, book, pay and manage private jet charter flights is exhibiting at MEBAA for the first time. Voo, developed by Avinoc, displays aircraft availability, prices, and route information via its online platform for simplified B2B flight bookings.

“Before Voo, business aviation had a significant problem – no digital solution to directly book and pay for charter flights,” explained Robert Plhak, CEO at Voo flights.

He said the new marketplace “solves the obvious structural,

operational and business-related problems and thereby benefits the entire industry”, adding: “Our ultra-efficient software provides charter brokers and private jet operators with the opportunity to close charter contracts within seconds.

“With our all-in-one Voo platform, we help to reduce time investment and costs, while increasing profit margins – all along with transparency in all aspects of the entire charter process and secure financial transactions. This is how we aim to revolutionise business aviation and the entire industry.”



VOOHOO!
Robert Plhak, CEO of Voo, whose new digital marketplace will revolutionise jet charter flight bookings



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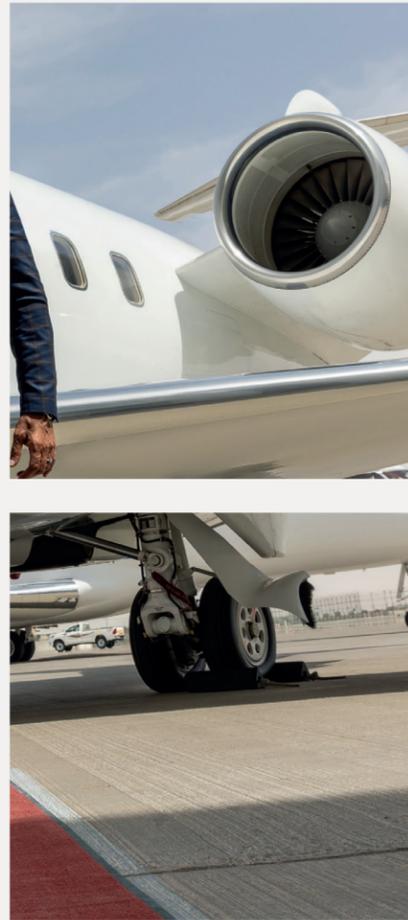
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Six of the best: Merger proves a record-breaking formula

Aviapartner and Argos Private Handling have enjoyed a record-breaking six months for traffic since they joined forces in May 2022 to become one of Europe's largest FBO networks.

The Aviapartner Group, which is exhibiting at MEBAA, is one of the leading European independent providers of ground handling services, including for private and corporate jets across Belgium, France, Spain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

"Despite the war in Ukraine, we are still breaking records," said John Kay, an FBO manager for Aviapartner Group. "In most of our stations we have been beating records; traffic has grown a lot after Covid. It's

quite an achievement. The merger was a way of gaining a bigger network and it was a great opportunity to grow in Italy, because Argos had a big FBO network there."

Barbara Ciolli, commercial director at Argos, added that the aim for the new partnership was to compete with the big players in the market, such as Signature Aviation and Universal Aviation.

"When Argos merged with Aviapartner we wanted to become a bigger group and to look outside Italy," she explained. "We wanted to be an alternative to the big names in the European market. We have knowledge on the business aviation side, and Aviapartner specialises in the commercial side."



▲
A winning partnership – (from left): Barbara Ciolli and Loris Di Filippo of Argos, with John Kay, an FBO manager for Aviapartner Group

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Renderings Courtesy of Massari Design

Citation XLS aims to shed some light in the Middle East

The lighter end of the business jet market is still a relatively underserved segment in the Middle East, but Dubai-based ArcosJet wants to change that.

The company is showing a Cessna Citation XLS+ mid-size business jet. The type is the world's best seller and a mainstay of the US fleet.

The 2015-built aircraft with its nine-seat cabin is available for purchase and immediate delivery.

It has a 3,441 km range with a cruising speed of 798km/h.

Powered by two highly efficient Pratt & Whitney PW545C engines, it is equipped with state-of-the-art Rockwell Collins Pro Line 21 avionics suite. Its take-off and landing characteristics allow it to operate off relatively short airfields and fly to small airports.

"The Citation XLS+ is an excellent workhorse – reliable, practical, roomy and efficient," said Sergey Lukin, ArcosJet Aircraft sales director.

"This aircraft's range allows for comfortable non-stop flights throughout the Middle East, as well as beyond – to Central Asia,

India, and some countries in north and north-east Africa.

"It will be a great purchase for those who value practicality and just the right balance of price,

quality, and performance. The demand for these models in the global aftermarket is consistently high."

Only a dozen business jets of this

model are in service in the MENA region, mostly in Turkey and north African countries. The potential of this aircraft in the region remains underestimated, Argos said.



▲ ArcosJet's Cessna Citation XLS on the show static – an excellent workhorse – reliable, practical, roomy and efficient

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Dubai delight as Embraer hits the sweet spot

Embraer Executive Jets will “continue to see a healthy uptick in sales” in the Middle East and surrounding regions in 2023 with Dubai at the epicentre of a blossoming business transformation, according to the company’s chief commercial officer, Stephen Friedrich.

“We’re positioned well for growth here, especially as Dubai positions itself not just as an international hub but also as a regional

one as well,” said Friedrich. “There has been a fantastic transformation and evolution in Dubai as it transitions from being much more than an oil-based economy.”

Dubai is at the forefront of the rapid emergence of new business sectors, such as the services economy, which is helping to grow the addressable market by 38%, said Peter Griffith, the company’s senior vice-president sales EMEA & APAC.

“We are seeing all kinds of different businesses sprout up and they all want good regional connectivity.”

Friedrich explained that first-time buyers were coming into the market with more travellers using business aircraft as airline networks shrank. “They always had the means, they just didn’t have the impetus. They are saying to us they need this aircraft to maintain our level of productivity. We believe



▲ Positioned well for growth – Embraer Executive Jets chief commercial officer, Stephen Friedrich

this move to business aircraft is a permanent shift in demand.”

Embraer believes its Praetor 500/600 family of super mid-sized business jets, a model that was designed specifically with the range to operate the 8.5-hour Dubai-to-London route with six passengers, is perfectly suited for customers wanting to use Dubai as a base and a hub.

In addition, Embraer has seen customers seeking to operate more efficiently looking at downsizing to a smaller business jet and “the Praetor is in that sweet spot”, said Griffith.

At MEBAA, Embraer is showing a Praetor 500 and a Phenom 300 light business jet.

The 300 is attractive to Embraer’s Indian customer base and the firm has multiple meetings with potential buyers here at the show, said Griffith. It has the range to operate from Dubai to Chennai comfortably, he added.

“We are very optimistic about opportunities in this region for both models and the 300 also sells well into Africa, where it’s become a real workhorse,” said Friedrich.

DC Aviation and G-OPS to build a Nice new FBO

Stuttgart-based DC Aviation and French global flight services operator, G-OPS, have signed an agreement to build and run a new FBO at Nice Airport in January 2023.

The Nice FBO will offer a spacious lounge designed by renowned architects, Hollin + Radoske, and will be equipped with the latest technological innovations.

DC Aviation and G-OPS have worked together for many years. The new DC Aviation-G-OPS FBO will leverage the French company’s experience in ground services for VIP clients and its historical presence in the French Riviera.

Both companies are environmentally aware in their operations, and have put enormous



effort into planning and creating a facility that has a reduced carbon footprint. The materials used to build the FBO have been chosen to provide maximum efficiency with minimal energy consumption. Plans are in place to provide E-VTOL support as well as alternative energy resources for aircraft, such as electric and hydrogen, when they become available.

Michael Kuhn, CEO of DC Aviation

A Nice plan: Karim Berrandou (left) of G-OPS with Michael Kuhn of DC Aviation

said: “We are looking forward to building a dependable and close-knit cooperation with the airport and our local partners to achieve the set goals – in terms of sustainability as well – while offering our customers facilities that meet our high standards with respect to quality, comfort, and discretion.”

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At Liberty to clean up new business



Show the range – Liberty Aviation has grown its business quickly since it started its operations six years ago: (from left) Robert Fichter, Beatrice Alexandra Bogden, and Marc Leleh at the show

Liberty Aviation has grown its business quickly since it started its operations six years ago.

The company provides a range of services – everything from light interior cleaning to a complete paint restoration, brightwork polishing and cabin smart repairs – based primarily at DWC and also DXB, as well as in Abu Dhabi.

“We basically get to wherever an aircraft is standing and operate 24/7,” said Robert Fichter, technical director.

The company, which also operates in Los Angeles, is the first in the UAE to be Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration (IICRC) certified, as well as holding ISO: 9001, ISO: 14001 and ISO: 45001 accreditations.

“This helps us stand out against competitors in the region,” said Upul Nirmal,

director of operations.

“The IICRC is for carpet cleaning but we expect to add upholstery and fabric cleaning to our credentials early next year.”

Focusing on business jets, the company mainly works with operators and MROs including Comlux, VistaJet, ExecuJet, Jet Aviation, Jet Flight Service and DC Aviation.

A year ago, the company also launched Aero Design, which is a 1,000sqm business jet Part 145 and 21G interior maintenance facility.

“We are in the process of outfitting a 1,000sqm business jet Part 145 and 21G interior maintenance facility to offer services from on-wing support between scheduled maintenance events to a complete aircraft interior refurbishment capability and capacity,” said company CEO, Marc Leleh.

Digital offering is XO’s trump card

Private aviation company, XO, part of Vista Group, said it “defines the future of travel” with its innovative offering of transparent pricing and instant booking, through its app and website.

“XO offers crowdfunding, elevated service, and ground-breaking technology,” said Ivan Santacreu, aviation sales manager.

Its membership options allow individuals to book everything from single seats on shared routes to full charter of whole aircraft.

“These are the only private aviation memberships that have no blackout days or expirations and are dynamically priced,” he said. XO members and clients can

request flights on more than 2,400 aircraft worldwide, including in excess of 350 aircraft in the Vista members’ fleet and the XO alliance fleet of 2,100+ private aircraft - covering all cabin classes.

“This is genuinely the most efficient, accessible, and transparent option in private aviation and available 24/7,” said Santacreu.

XO is already growing fast with the number of XO deposit members in the first half of 2022 increased 33% from last year.

“XO is a part 295 air charter broker and does not operate any aircraft. All flights are performed by licenced and certified US and foreign air carriers,” Santacreu



said. The company has offices in Dubai, based in DIFC, and Santacreu said the Middle East is a very important region for the company with many customers being high net-worth individuals.

▲ XO offers crowdfunding, elevated service, and ground-breaking technology – Ivan Santacreu, aviation sales manager



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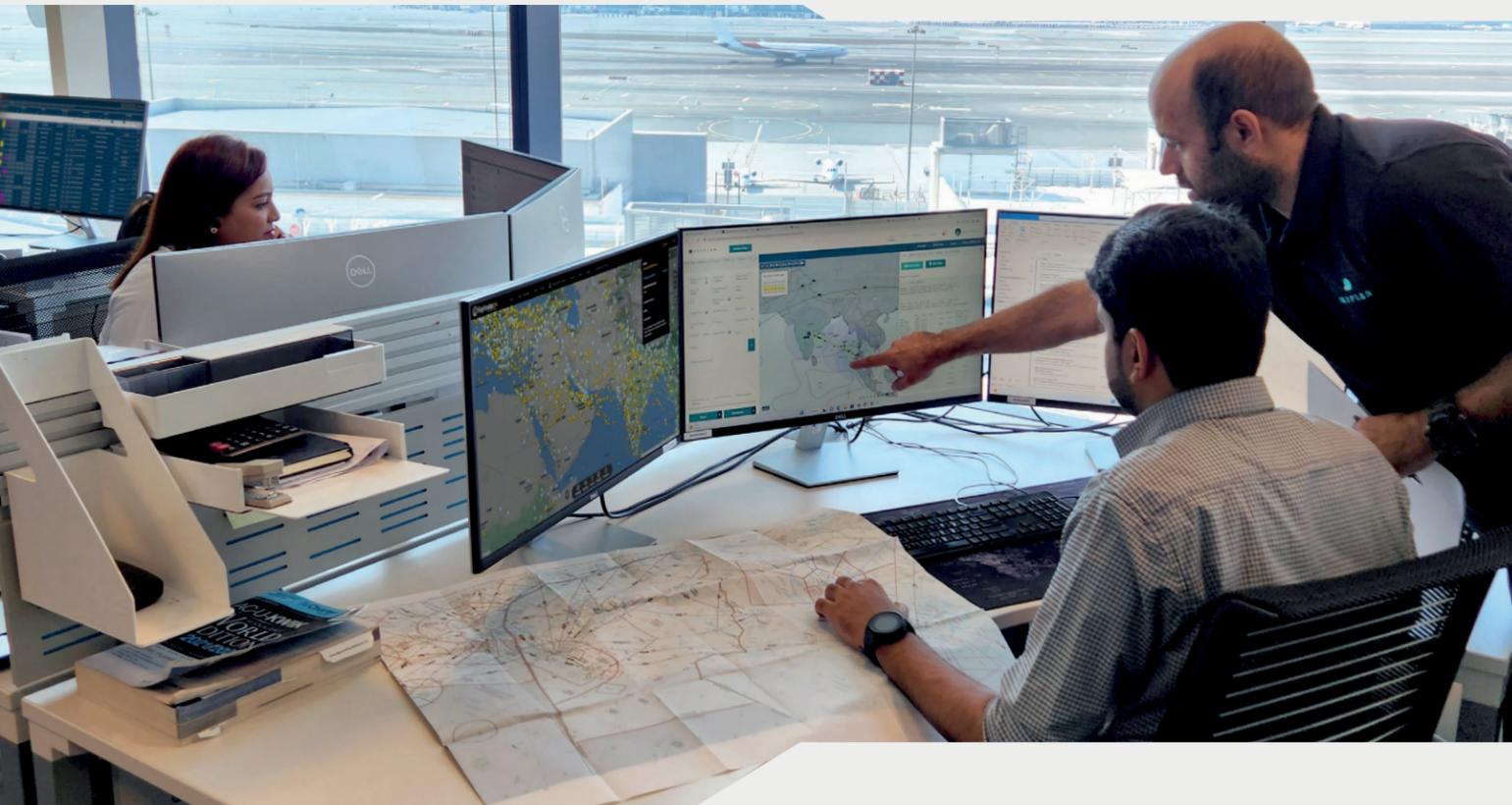
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Citadel is new ACJ service stronghold



Tickled pink: Citadel's Noel Christen (left) and Benoit Defforge shake hands on the US firm joining the ACJ Service Centre Network

Citadel Completions was unveiled as the sixth member of the Airbus Corporate Jets (ACJ) Service Centre Network at the show yesterday.

"We are tickled to death to be part of the network... we see a lot of opportunities," said Noel Christen, vice-president of operations at Citadel.

Benoit Defforge, president of ACJ, said a major reason for expanding the network is an upcoming surge of aircraft modification work as operators introduce the next generation of in-flight connectivity products. With more than 200 aircraft fitted with current generation technology "we need to be able to offer retrofit around the world", he said.

Citadel, the Lake Charles, Louisiana-based large aircraft completion firm, began talking with Airbus about becoming an authorised service centre for the European manufacturer's aircraft three years ago, said Christen. It was a "very cooperative and very deliberate" process, which included Citadel obtaining ISO14001 international certification, he added.

Both Citadel and ACJ will offer the US company's interior modification, refurbishment, and MRO services to customers.

Citadel becomes the latest service centre network outfit, after HAECO in Xiamen, China, Jet Aviation's centres in Dubai and Basel, Sabena Technics in Bordeaux, and Comlux in Indianapolis.

Why UAS is Alpha's new star partner

Private charter operator, Alpha Star, used the show yesterday to announce that global trip support solutions provider, UAS International Trip Support, has become its preferred partner.

Riyadh-based Alpha Star operates domestic and international scheduled and charter services, as well as turnkey solutions in aircraft, air ambulance and airport management.

The new strategic partnership will see UAS ensure that the charter operator receives VVIP handling and pricing at all global destinations and take care of its fleet of 19 aircraft.

Abdunnasser Alkheraif, CEO of Alpha Star, said: "It is a proud moment for us to collaborate with

UAS, who will enable us to perfect our flight planning with peace of mind that we can solicit industry-trusted support services to sustain our VIP customers' satisfaction and trust."

Underlining the importance of flight support expertise, Mohammed Al Husary, UAS executive president, explained the FIFA World Cup has demonstrated the need to plan ahead. "Traffic has exceeded our expectations. The prices of commercial flights are high, so the cost of flying by private jets has become more competitive," he said.

"There's also the convenience of flying back and forth from Doha (where accommodation is limited) to Dubai."



AlphaStar's CEO Abdunnasser Alkheraif (left) with UAS's Omar Hosari – the companies are now preferred partners

UAS has been catering for eight to 12 flights a day during the tournament, ranging from small to medium-sized jets.

Al Husary also noted that, since the pandemic, UAS has seen plenty of new entrants to the business

aviation market, as well as growth in a younger passenger clientele.

"Customers, who typically flew business or first-class and who thought flying privately was for the elite, have realised the benefits of going by private jet."



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IASO planning re-emergence

The International Aviation Services Organisation (IASO) was launched with a fanfare at the European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (EBACE) in 2016 by MEBAA founding chairman, Ali Alnaqbi, but has maintained a low profile ever since. However, according to Shukri Khalifa, executive vice president of Mixjet, the organisation has been working hard in the background and is planning its first events next year. Khalifa said: "We are planning an exhibition in a Middle Eastern country and are negotiating with a number of different regional governments to find a venue. That could be the UAE, as it is a hub, but could also be Saudi Arabia or Qatar. Khalifa said that current members of IASO include fuel suppliers, ground handling service providers, and trip support companies.

Connecting the unconnected

Growth in business jet activity means an increase in the demand for in-flight connectivity. And, while there is Wi-Fi connectivity in business aviation, it's not global and it's not reliable, according to Nick Maynard, OneWeb's marketing director, mobility. "As business aviation continues to bounce back, the appetite for IFC in the Middle East is insatiable. Discerning customers want to be connected and, if they're not, that can be a big issue," said Maynard. OneWeb has launched more than 500 low-Earth orbit satellites with the full constellation of 648 due to be in orbit in early 2023.



Abdulnasser Al Kheraif (right) signs the deal with Textron Aviation's David De Kock

Debut customer for Latitude

Alpha Star Aviation Services is set to be the first operator of the Cessna Citation Latitude in the Middle East, having signed an agreement with Textron Aviation for the purchase of two of the mid-size business jets. The first aircraft is due to be delivered next year.

Abdulnasser Al Kheraif, CEO Alpha

Star, said: "We are delighted to be the first customer for the Citation in the region. These medivac-dedicated jets will add capability to our current fleet of 19 aircraft." The Cessna and Beechcraft business aircraft brands are represented in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by Wallan Aviation.

BBJ bullish as business aviation is bouncing back

Business aviation has roared back post pandemic with strong interest from customers in the Middle East for wide-body jets, according to Erika Pearson, president of Boeing Business Jets (BBJ).

The Seattle-based company has sold four BBJ aircraft so far in 2022, delivered two BBJ MAXs and seen one BBJ wide-body enter service.

Speaking outside the BBJ chalet at MEBAA yesterday, Pearson struck an optimistic tone as she outlined the state of the market: "Aviation, and business aviation in particular, is back. We've seen a ton of interest in our products, both on the commercial side – we

mentioned 1,400 MAX sales since returning to service – and we have sold four aircraft, which is fantastic for us.

"We have a lot more interest in the product and we are hoping we will have some more announcements here before the end of the year."

There is robust demand in the Gulf, with the UAE and Saudi Arabia second and third behind the United States for BBJ placements.

Pearson added: "In the Middle East, there has been lots of interest in the product and, in particular, on the wide-body side, on the 787, and we are looking to the future with the 777-9."



Erika Pearson, president of Boeing Business Jets (BBJ)



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LARGE JET MARKET SOARS FOR AIRBUS CORPORATE JETS

The arrival of the “game-changing” TwoTwenty to the portfolio, an ageing fleet of in-service types, and strong traffic growth in the Middle East all add up to tell a strong story for Airbus Corporate Jets (ACJ) in the coming years, Benoit Defforge, president of ACJ, told a briefing held at the show yesterday.

“We believe we will grab a large piece of the market and will sell 15 aircraft in this region in the next

five years,” said Defforge.

This year has been “pretty good” for ACJ with two orders for the TwoTwenty, a VIP version of the A220 narrow-body, three orders for the ACJ319/320neo family, and one commitment for the ACJ330 wide-body, said Chadi Saade, vice-president commercial at ACJ.

There is also plenty of interest in the ACJ350 from the Middle East region, and his team is working on a sales opportunity for this

type today, he added. The initial TwoTwenty will be delivered in the first half of 2023 to Dubai’s luxury Five Hotel, said Defforge. To date, ACJ has sold eight TwoTwentys “even though nobody has seen the aircraft yet”, he added.

ACJ’s aim is to target the “same price point with the TwoTwenty as ultra-long-range business jets”, said Defforge. The delivery lead time for this type with a completed cabin is 2025, he said.

At the show, the company launched its ACJ Connect suite of services, which includes live in-flight internet and in-flight entertainment, and a live flightdeck operations and aircraft monitoring system.

ACJ believes many operators will want to upgrade their fleets with ACJ Connect, which is in certification and should see aircraft equipped with this system in 12-14 months, said Defforge.



Trine Braathen, senior manager sustainability – carbon markets, World Kinect Energy ▲

Take action now on carbon offsetting

The only opportunity for businesses to take action now on sustainability is to buy carbon offsets. That was the message from Trine Braathen, senior manager sustainability – carbon markets, World Kinect Energy, at yesterday’s BizAv talk sustainability session.

“For me, the only short-term solution is to purchase carbon offsets to compensate for emissions, while working on strategies and targets to actually reduce carbon,” said Braathen, stressing this was her personal view.

Acknowledging the panel’s

focus on sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), she said the limited availability of these alternative fuels means this is a medium to long-term solution.

However, the panel stressed the critical role SAF will play in decarbonising aviation. Alexandre Geahchan, account aviation manager at Air BP, said: “SAF is a drop-in solution we can use right now.”

Geahchan and Braathen described how a book-and-claim system is a promising route that would allow operators to pay for SAF without using it on their actual aircraft, taking advantage via a traded certificate of its “green value”. The system avoids the need to distribute SAF to all locations.

Geahchan said his firm has a target to serve 20% of the worldwide demand for SAF by 2030 with its plans to build five SAF production plants at various global locations.

The sustainability approach business aviation players should take is first to “map your emissions” to understand the organisation’s overall carbon impact, said Braathen.

The second step is to take measures, such as reducing energy consumption and employee travel, to reduce emissions. The third step is to source renewable energy, such as through certificates.

Comlux breaks new ground

Comlux has begun the ground-breaking of its new hangar facility at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub (MBRAH) at Dubai South.

The future facility will span 12,000sqm and boast a 5,000sqm hangar, in addition to hosting an adjacent building spanning 2,250sqm across three floors.

The hangar will accommodate two ACJ or BBJ family aircraft types simultaneously (up to a maximum ACJ321 or BBJ3 size), including the

future ACJ TwoTwenty, soon to enter service with Comlux Aviation.

Technical shops will also be established on the ground floor of the adjacent building.

As well as a new design showroom for the ACJ TwoTwenty, the two additional floors will also be dedicated to commercial and management offices, lounges, and meeting rooms.

By the end of 2023, the hangar will be completely operational, allowing Comlux to provide its Middle East customers with line main-



▼ The ground-breaking ceremony took place in the presence of Tahnoon Saif, CEO of Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub, and Richard Gaona, executive chairman and CEO of Comlux

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VistaJet aiming to consolidate after 'amazing year' of bumper growth



▶ Celebrating a growth boom in the Middle-East: Ian Moore, chief commercial officer, VistaJet

Vista Global Holdings has had an amazing year. During the first six months of 2022, the company added more than 100 aircraft and expanded its managed fleet through scheduled aircraft deliveries and two strategic acquisitions.

Growth in the Middle East was driven by existing clients purchasing more hours, with total hours sold up by 60% year-on-year in the region.

Ian Moore, chief commercial officer, VistaJet, said: "The market is definitely growing. From the back end of 2018 onwards we have seen a trend from an asset-heavy industry to an asset-light business model. We feel that the pandemic shone a light on private aviation, and on to an industry that can be opaque.

"We have a very easy way to get into the industry, and a very forecastable product. You know what you are going to get and what it is going to cost you, anywhere in the world. We make it easy to do business with us from a financial and operational perspective."

VistaJet expects to see further growth in the region. Moore said:

"The Middle East, India and Asia are our main regions for growth. India is big opportunity for us. We have a second aircraft going into that market in early 2023. Asia's growth has been 20% up on pre-pandemic levels. The US has also been a big driver for us, as we are relatively new to that region."

However, while not ruling it out, Moore does not think the company will rush to add further aircraft to its fleet.

He said: "Externally, we will always be on the lookout, that is the nature of the company, but I can't see us buying significantly more aircraft for a while. We have gone from 70 aircraft three or four years ago to having 360 in our fleet now. We have a lot of refurbishment of aircraft from the acquisition to be done – turning them into our silver and red.

"From an internal executive perspective, I am more than comfortable with what we have now. We have people, we have aircraft, we have markets, and we have systems. We are integrating them, and that's not easy with multiple companies."

AIR CHATEAU LAUNCHES DUBAI HELIPARK PHASE II

With 16.2% of global ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWI) living in UAE, the demand for helicopter flights is on the rise.

Air Chateau, which opened the UAE's first commercial heliport with access to air and land side of Dubai World Central (DWC) during the 2021 Dubai Airshow, is now looking to expand its helipark further.

Built across 42,800sqm, the existing facility features eight helipads and is built adjacent to the existing private jet terminals at DWC.

Phase two, which Air Chateau is hoping will be complete by the end of 2023, will include a new VIP terminal building, as well as a dedicated private terminal for roy-

alty and heads of state. It will also see the development of commercial real estate for aviation companies, a commercial hangar to accommodate helicopters and the development of an aviation school for trainee helicopter pilots.

Plans are also afoot to develop a

heliport network across the UAE and the company is in the process of obtaining its air operator's certificate (AOC) so it can operate its own fleet of helicopters.

"We are excited to be a part of the growing aviation sector of Dubai," said Dr. Samir Mohamed,

Air Chateau founder and chairman.

"It is a privilege to serve the market and provide last-mile services targeted at the HNWI. We will work closely and be guided by the authorities to propel these services."



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