

SHOW BUSINESS

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WHO DARES WINS

DUBAI TO LAUNCH WORLD- FIRST AAM INTEGRATOR CENTRE



Shake on it: Tahnoon Saif, CEO Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub; Dr Fethi Chebil, CEO and founder of VPorts; and Walid Ibrahim Al Rahmani

Dubai is set to become the global hub for advanced air mobility (AAM), with the launch of the world's first AAM integrator centre in the Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub.

The centre will be developed by VPorts, Dubai South, and crucially, the UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), it was announced at MEBAA yesterday.

The ground-breaking project includes dedicated flight-testing airspace, assigned blocked airspace, and surrounding

technologies designed to nurture the growth of the AAM industry.

Development of the centre, which will bring the UAE an initial direct foreign investment of \$40 million over three years, is expected to generate \$7 billion in direct revenues in Dubai and Abu Dhabi over the quarter of a century.

It will create around 1,500 highly paid jobs in the UAE. Although the centre will be developed in Dubai, it is planned to be part of a larger UAE-wide network. While AAM is discussed globally, and around 650 companies are developing eVTOL aircraft, it is the active support

of the regulatory authority that will make Dubai so attractive as a global hub.

With regulatory support, the centre can accommodate safe testing for certification, bringing the future of green mobility closer, and encouraging AAM companies, and their wide support systems, to come to the UAE.

Time to take daring steps

Walid Ibrahim Al Rahmani, assistant director general – strategy & international affairs at UAE GCAA, said it was time to take daring steps in order to move ahead. He said: "The UAE is home

to people who are looking for first movers' advantage.

"It is befitting that we are talking to Dubai South and Vports; it came to us at the right time, as we already had in our strategic plans for 2023 to 2026 to publish regulations for the certification of vertiports in the city.

"We were already prepared to support such developments with regulatory oversight, and we are looking forward to learning from the experience and from the test bed that is going to commence operation soon, which will help us to develop and modify our regulatory system." ▲



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Helicopter maintenance boost as SAEI and THC get together

Saudia Aerospace Engineering Industries (SAEI) and The Helicopter Company (THC) have signed an agreement to explore the potential of a rotorcraft heavy maintenance base in the kingdom to support the expanding helicopter industry. The proposed plans would include new hangars and would aim to develop partnership opportunities with leading OEMs for authorised service centre certification.

“The timing of this alliance is optimal as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is entering a period in which rotorcraft usage is expected to increase significantly in terms of volume and the range applications across both public and private sectors,” said Captain Fahd H

Cynndy, chief executive officer, SAEI. Part of THC expansion includes the impending delivery of six Airbus ACH160s. During the show, THC signed an HCare in-service contract with Airbus Helicopters to cover the new fleet. The package has been tailored to THC’s planned operational needs, providing parts availability services to optimise maintenance planning and service delivery.

“With the helicopter industry expanding in the kingdom, THC is facing high demand from clients for high-quality, safe and reliable services,” said THC CEO Captain Arnaud Martinez. “Our agreement with Airbus will help us to ensure the needs of our esteemed clients are met.”



▶ Captain Fahd H Cynndy, chief executive officer, SAEI, (left) and Captain Arnaud Martinez, chief executive officer, THC, at the signing ceremony

Maintaining sales all over the world

Duncan Aviation is the largest family owned MRO company in the world. Based in the US, it started out 66 years ago as an aircraft sales company. After early success, people asked if it could maintain the aircraft too. Today, it is the core part of its business. However, Tom Barber, aircraft sales and acquisitions (pictured), is at MEBAA, to generate interest in buying and selling business jets in the region. “This year has been remarkable for me having completed 10 aircraft transactions involving parties all over the world, including the acquisition of several Embraer Legacy 600s and the sale of a BBJ2,” he said. “Of those 10 transactions, five were brokered sales and five were aircraft acquisitions. “We do a fair amount of business deals in the Middle East. It is certainly a region of opportunity.”



Amac announces new office as it explores Saudi Arabia expansion plan

The Middle East is a “market of opportunity” for Amac Aerospace, the Swiss VIP completion and maintenance services provider for the corporate and private aviation sector, as it explores expansion in Saudi Arabia.

Speaking at MEBAA yesterday, Bernd Schramm, the group chief operating officer, said the company was establishing an office in the country.

“The Middle East always gives us an opportunity to grow,” he said. “We have started with representation in Saudi Arabia, and we will closely monitor developments there.”

Amac’s Saudi presence may evolve to include technical and other support services,

Schramm added. The Middle East is “very important” to Amac, which recently accomplished a 120-month inspection on a privately owned Bombardier Global 6000 for a long-term customer based in Saudi Arabia.

Amac, formed in 2007, operates a network of eight hangars for maintenance, design and modifications activities across Europe, Turkey and Lebanon.

In 2018, Amac opened its second Turkey-based hangar at the Milas-Bodrum Airport, adding to its facility in Istanbul.

“We see high demand in our airline maintenance facility in Turkey,” Schramm said. “There is strong growth there.”



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Growing the Empire at Dubai South

Dubai-based Empire Aviation Group has announced plans to develop a new, multi-purpose business aviation facility next to the VIP Terminal at the Mohammed bin Rashid Aerospace Hub (MBRAH) at Dubai South.

The centre will be built, owned, managed and operated by Empire, with construction work starting in early 2023 and completion expected by the end of 2024.

The facility will house the global corporate headquarters of Empire, as well as the operations control

and continuing airworthiness management organisation (CAMO) for all group operations, crew check-in and briefing area.

The centre will also make premium office space available for aviation and related companies, as well as luxury retail food and beverage outlets and a rooftop lounge for entertainment and events.

Paras P Dhamecha, founder and managing director of Empire Aviation Group, said: "We are delighted to sign this agreement. The facility will meet the super high-



▲ Tahnoon Saif with Paras P Dhamecha at the show

quality standards expected in Dubai and support MBRAH's vision to make Dubai the aviation capital of the world."

Tahnoon Saif, CEO MBRAH, said: "This agreement reiterates our mandate to attract the top players in the industry to establish their presence at MBRAH and benefit from our ecosystem to connect with global markets. We look forward to working closely with Empire Aviation Group and assisting them in all their business needs."

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Dubai in its Prime...

Only launched last August, Prime Trip Support is making its debut at MEBA this year. However, founder and CEO, Amar Alhussari, has attended many times before.

He strongly believes that Dubai will continue to lead the region.

He said: "Dubai is the most promising business aviation hub in the world. The government has invested so much in infrastructure. In Dubai, when they do things, they do it quickly and they do it right. They know what is required for the worldwide operators."

The show has been very successful for the company, so far.

He said: "The way MEBA is organised and marketed ensures the quality of the attendees. Who would have thought that Dubai would have a show where you see Boeing, Honeywell and all these major companies treating it as a must-do?"

Keeping a watch on Dubai's heritage

A little time piece of UAE history is being displayed at the Qaffal stand.

Ten years ago Qaffal founder, Andrew Savage, met a local pearl diver in Dubai who told "wonderful stories" of these olden days.

"The UAE wasn't built on oil and tourism, but on pearl diving," explained Savage.

"This diver was passionate about the heritage of the UAE and he worried that future generations would miss out on such stories – to a point that it made him cry.



"It struck me that I would love to take on board his stories and honour the heritage," said Savage.

"High-quality watches are always such special things to pass down the generations so I set to work with a group of watch experts and,

after four years, we had what we believe does the heritage proud by building a natural salt water pearl into the watch."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

PILOTS' PROGRESS

With the Middle East continuing to face a pilot shortage as air travel demand surges, Flight Safety International is seeing an increased number of trainee pilots coming from the UAE. The flight simulation and aviation training company, which has its training facilities primarily based in the US, has a strong customer presence in the region and offers a range of training options tailored to business and commercial aviation.



Helmet shows VistaJet's Sainz of the times...

Visitors to the VistaJet stand can see the racing helmet worn by Spanish Formula One driver Carlos Sainz. VistaJet has partnered with the Scuderia Ferrari team for the fourth year running. As an official partner, VistaJet is flying the team between races throughout the Formula 1 season, allowing members to utilise time off track and arrive in optimum condition.

◀ Pole position: VistaJet's Houdda Akouche with Sainz's helmet

Don't panic! Seeing your way clear when smoke gets in your eyes

Smoke in the cockpit can have catastrophic consequences, but VisionSafe's emergency vision assurance system (EVAS) provides a clear path through which a pilot can see flight instruments and out of the front windscreen, regardless of smoke density.

Thousands of EVAS units are installed in Gulfstream, Bombardier, Dassault, and Embraer

aircraft, as well as commercial passenger and cargo fleets, and VisionSafe is now partnering with Dubai-based Dynamic Advanced Training (DAT) to ensure crew have the skills to use it.

"The product VisionSafe offers solves a very big problem in the cockpit," explained Mark Kammer, operations director at DAT. "It's simple but you need to be able

to use it when you require it so, in a worst case scenario, people are actually prepared. It's about muscle memory and being able to utilise the resources at your disposal."

Chris Skurat, director of business aviation sales at VisionSafe, added: "When smoke fills the cockpit, pilots can't see their hand in front of their face. What EVAS

does is create a clear pocket of air, like a plastic beach ball, that is custom shaped for each cockpit type. Once it's deployed, within 30 to 40 seconds, the pilots have clear vision of their instrument panel.

"The first thing is panic, and that's where DAT helps, because they prepare you so much to make it almost natural to know what your next steps are."

Why it all gels well for ToughGuard-Aero



Sealing the deal! Dan Reid, owner and CEO of ToughGuard-Aero

ToughGuard-Aero's paint sealant is already protecting a wide variety of military, commercial and business aircraft – and now it has gained approval from Dassault Aviation and will soon be listed in all Falcon Jet aircraft maintenance manuals (AMMs).

The resin-based product, which creates a barrier of protection by mechanically bonding to airframe paint, shielding it from UV, soot and other dirt and debris, has also been tested and approved by Embraer.

Speaking at the show, Dan Reid, owner and CEO of ToughGuard-Aero, said: "There was a push from

Dassault to get this into the maintenance manuals because they were seeing the value of it for customers and for themselves."

The gel coating not only adds a glossy finish but also extends the life of paint by 50%. It has been shown to reduce drag and, therefore, fuel burn by nearly 1%. It also has an environmental benefit by reducing the number of paint cycles an airframe must go through.

Attending MEBAA is a chance for Reid to connect with other OEMs. "We would love to be in the AMMs of Bombardier, Gulfstream and Pilatus," he said.

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Wealthy newcomers mean business is booming in Saudi – NasJet boss

Despite global economic headwinds, business is booming in Saudi Arabia. And, according to Yosef Hafiz, vice president of commercial sales and marketing at NasJet – the 100% privately owned private aviation operator and service provider in Saudi Arabia – nowhere is this more evident than in business jet activity in and around the kingdom.

“According to *Arab News*, Saudi Arabia’s capital, Riyadh, recorded the fastest millionaire population growth globally in the first half of 2022 and we’re seeing an increasing number of private jet charters from these wealthy newcomers,” said Hafiz.

While much of the recent swell in jet charters can be attributed to the FIFA World Cup, the kingdom’s ‘vision 2030’ is also behind a

growing number of luxury tourism schemes in the region including Neom, Amaala, Qiddiyah and the Red Sea project, which will continue to attract new private aviation customers.

A dedicated business aviation hub is already being planned for the Red Sea project.

“We’re also seeing a big push from the General Authority for Civil Aviation (GACA) for business and general aviation in terms of expanding infrastructure and building private aviation airports, terminals and FBOs,” explained Hafiz.

“We’re really at the start of developing the business aviation sector in the kingdom, but we’re taking off in the right direction. Another eight years or so from now and private aviation is really going

to be thriving here.”

NasJet has a fleet of 18 aircraft with jets ranging from a Boeing 747-400 right down to a Cessna Citation Excel and a Pilatus PC24. “We’re very proud to be the first aircraft management company in the kingdom to operate the PC24. It is also the first Aruba-registered aircraft to be added under a private category in Saudi Arabia,” Hafiz continued.

With the rise in charter operations, a trend seen across the region, Hafiz concluded: “Going forward, our core business will focus on aircraft management and charter operations. Charter flights have increased 50-60% since the Covid-19 pandemic, so we will continue to add two to three managed aircraft per year to our fleet to keep up with demand.”



▲ Yosef Hafiz, vice president of commercial sales and marketing at NasJet

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Stand by for the UAM shake-up



▲ The introduction of air taxis is now inevitable says Frederic Aguetant

Urban air mobility (UAM) will lead to a shake-up of the helicopter and business aviation market and operators must be “creative” if they are to weather the changes, according to Frederic Aguetant, the founding president of Helipass, a platform for helicopter and private jet bookings.

Aguettant said the introduction of air taxis was now inevitable and that some companies would need to “reinvent” themselves to embrace this new reality. “It will be a reality. There is too much money invested in urban air mobility to stop it. This new mobility will affect the helicopter market first, but also the business aviation market.

“The main use is the transfer from city to airport, because the model is a 20-minute flight time, so it’s very easy. We hope to target the price of a black cab.”

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Five new helicopters for Falcon

Abu Dhabi-based Falcon Aviation Services has signed a deal with Airbus for five new H130 helicopters. The aircraft, which will be delivered over the next year, will be used to upgrade the company’s Falcon Tours fleet. Captain Ramandeep Oberoi, COO of Falcon Aviation Services, said: “The H130s will boost the fleet for our helicopter sightseeing tours operations. This will further our presence in the market and help us double this business in the coming years, both in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.” The H130, an intermediate single-engine helicopter with a spacious cabin for one pilot and up to seven passengers, is popular with pilots, who love its sporty and safe flying qualities. It is the quietest helicopter on the market in its category, helped by Airbus’ Fenestron shrouded tail rotor and automatic variable rotor speed control

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Alice sparks plenty of interest

Eviation's Alice all-electric aircraft is generating a buzz in this region with customers interested in the nine-seat regional version, the cargo variant, and the six-seat business aircraft version of the in-development type, according to Greg Davis, Eviation chief executive.

"We are in active discussions with customers for the six-seat executive version of the Alice, with a couple of companies vying to be the first operator in this region," said Davis.

Eviation conducted the first flight of Alice on September 27 from its US base in Moses Lake, Washington. Since then, interest in Alice has soared with the order-book doubling to more than 300 letters of intent, said Davis.

The prospects for all-electric aircraft in this region are bright, with numerous potential applications for an electric type with a range of up to 250nm.

Here at the show Davis is highlighting the benefits of the business variant of Alice with the electric aircraft expected to deliver a cabin environment at least 20% quieter than a comparably sized conventional type. "It's an immediate advantage," he said.

The body of the aircraft is also

wider to accommodate the batteries needed to power Alice so we "ended up with an aircraft with a premium, large cabin feel with more elbow and shoulder room", he said.

These passenger experience benefits add to the fact that Alice will be a zero-emission aircraft. Eviation certification is planned for 2027.



▲ Catch the buzz – Greg Davis, Eviation chief executive at the show

Edwards sets the record straight

International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) director general, Kurt Edwards, put sustainability at the top of the MEBAA agenda declaring that he wanted to "set the record straight" on the industry's green record.

Observing that "we've been getting a lot of [negative] press in this region", Edwards asserted that business aviation has been working strongly on sustainability for years, in addition to leading on several technology-related industry fronts.

"We all want to be more fuel-efficient, and our industry is very innovative, often more than our friends in the air transport industry," said Edwards, who cited pioneering technology such as winglets and leading on avionics.

"A number of technologies started with us," added Edwards, who is chairing the BizAv talks being held at the event.

"We've also been leading in terms of setting the roadmap to get to net-zero carbon emissions in 2050, which has largely been adopted by ICAO," said Edwards.

IBAC's work on establishing a strong sustainability strategy began as far back as 2009, he concluded.



▲ IBAC director general, Kurt Edwards

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Why biometric controls face a great future

Abu-Dhabi-headquartered technical solutions provider, Tahaluf, is showcasing its border crossing suite at this year's MEBAA.

The biometric border control lane uses facial recognition to identify and verify passenger details.

With the world more connected than ever, ensuring passenger safety and country security remains a top priority for the aerospace sector and business aviation is no exception. According to Tahaluf, the border crossing suite helps reduce processing times, enhances security, lowers costs and increases passenger and employee satisfaction.

Already used at commercial airports around the world, including Sharjah, Tahaluf is now looking to deploy its technology in private aviation terminals, business airports and FBOs across the region.



▲ Fatima Alic, marketing specialist at Tahaluf, using the border crossing suite

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Cedar raising the standard in Lebanon

Lebanon is “the entrance to the Middle East, which is why it is a popular business aviation hub”, according to Hassan Ghalayini, sales manager for Cedar Executive. The company, an affiliate of Middle East Airlines (MEA), is based in Beirut and offers premium travel services with its two Legacy 500 jets.

“The Legacy 500 is mid-size and able to carry nine passengers. It proves very popular with our customers, including brokers and high-net-work individuals. We offer a 24/7 service,” said Ghalayini.

The company has six pilots and first officers, all Lebanese, on standby. “Our Cedar Executive pilots are

hand-picked and go through a vigorous process in order to make our final cut,” he said. “We also offer the only private aviation crew lounge in Lebanon.”

The Cedar Jet Centre FBO – also under the MEA umbrella – offers a full ground handling equipment service for anything from a Cessna to an A380.

Ghalayini said: “In cooperation with our sister maintenance company, MASCO, we offer aircraft hangarage and full maintenance services for Airbus A319CJ, Boeing BBJ, Cessna CE-510 Mustang & CE-525 M2, Hawker H800/850/900XP and Cessna 172, Cessna CE-525, and EMB550.”



Farah Kanaan and Hassan Ghalayini at the show

Air travel riding a new wave

Dornier Seawings declared the flying boat is back at MEBAA yesterday as it signed an agreement with Gulf Enterprises to provide sales, marketing, operational and maintenance set-up and aftermarket support for its Seastar amphibian aircraft in the region.

Dornier hopes to have its new generation Seastar, an aircraft that was first developed in the 1980s, certified by the end of 2023 and in the skies with the first customer by the middle of 2024.

The company plans to produce 300 in the first 10 years.

The aircraft, backed by the Dornier family and two Chinese investment companies, will benefit from upgrades, including avionics and a corrosion-resistant composite structure, which Jurgen Heinrich, co-CEO of Dornier Seawings, said brought it firmly “into the 21st century”.

The Seastar, which seats 12 passengers and has a range of 900nm, has generated interest from customers in the Gulf, Caribbean and south-east Asia, with memoran-

dums of understanding (MoUs) signed with several undisclosed parties.

Heinrich added: “Covid gave us a setback in terms of our progress, but as we are approaching the finishing line, we are here at MEBAA showing the world our intentions. Now we are ready, now we are back.

“The flying boat is being reintroduced, and now is the time to go out to the market and turn our

MoUs into firm orders.”

“Representing the pioneering spirit and heritage of Dornier is an honour,” said Richard Haas, CEO of Dubai-based Gulf Enterprises.

Ali Alnaqbi, executive chairman of MEBAA, said during the signing ceremony: “We are pleased that the Dornier legacy of flying boats is reaching our shores in the not-too-distant future to serve the diverse mission requirements of our ever-growing coastlines and islands.”



Pushing the boat out: Jurgen Heinrich, co-CEO of Dornier Seawings with a model of the new generation Seastar

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

The wheels of progress

DC Aviation Al-Futtaim has opened a new wheel shop at its Dubai South facility. It will enable DCAF to provide services on a range of aircraft wheels including Challenger 604/605/650, Global Express and Global 7500, with plans to expand the scope to cover Challenger 850, 300/350 and Airbus A320 Series, in addition to other maintenance requests.

Maintenance manager, Chris Rosewarne, said: “The launch of the wheel shop complements our existing maintenance portfolio. We are also investing in our technicians and support staff to increase our overall capacity, allowing us to handle larger maintenance inspections and/or multiple projects.”

As part of the requirement for the wheel shop, DCAF obtained its EASA approvals last month. The company is audited by the German Luftfahrt-Bundesamt (LBA) and is authorised to issue an EASA Form 1.



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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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Warwick Stone – Climate change is of great importance to us ▲

A great Venue for the VIP market

Collins Aerospace, part of Raytheon Group, is displaying its high-definition retrofit cabin management system – Venue – dedicated to the VIP market. “When the time comes to consider a new cabin or upgrade, and you want your investment to reward you with exceptional comfort and efficiency, then Venue is the answer,” said Warwick Stone, account director avionics.

Stone said at the heart of Venue is a fibre-optic backbone with strong bandwidth. “The superior system architecture will accommodate changing needs of aircraft cabin config-

uration, and its unobtrusive design profile gives you total control. Sound is crystal clear. Touch-screen controllers are intuitive and unobtrusive. And configurable displays throughout the cabin pack enough punch to lift the entertainment experience to a whole new level,” he said.

The company has so far fitted more than 2,000 aircraft with Venue. Stone said: “We are heavily invested in sustainability, which can be seen in our environmental, social, and governance report. Climate change is of great importance to us.”

Market back on track post-Covid, reports JSSI

Exhibitor Jet Support Services Inc (JSSI) continues to see high levels of demand across the Middle East, which it describes as an “important and growing market”.

Pascale Barhouche, JSSI’s director of business development Middle East & India (pictured right), said: “The growth we’re seeing stems from a natural boost in tourism following the lifting of

travel restrictions following the Covid-19 pandemic.

“This year the rise in business aviation traffic has also stemmed from events such as the Dubai Expo and, more recently, the FIFA World Cup.”

Barhouche noted: “We are still seeing requests for maintenance support in Saudi Arabia and our customers report high levels of demand.”

JSSI is seeing “an overwhelming interest” in pre-owned aircraft. Barhouche said: “We’ve seen a significant increase in demand in the region, aligning with wider global trends.”

However, the new aircraft market is not slowing down. “New OEM deliveries continue to flow into the Middle East and several existing

orders are coming into fruition.”

With the market facing ongoing supply chain constraints, particularly on the pre-owned side, Barhouche said: “JSSI is ready to welcome aircraft owners and fleet



operators who will need an independent maintenance advocate equipped with the data, team, and strategy to reduce downtime, optimise efficiency and make costs more predictable.”

JSSI currently supports approximately 20% of the global business aviation fleet and oversees more than 10,000 maintenance events annually.

Having acquired two new businesses, SierraTrax and Traxall, in the last 18 months, the company is now looking forward to more of its Middle East customers using its digital maintenance tracking capabilities.

“With the rising number of aircraft in the region, and an increase in industry activity, it’s a great time to help existing customers, as well as new entrants to the market, level up in their aircraft management by leveraging our technology,” she concluded.



Fahad Ibrahim Aljarboa of CEO Saudi Private Aviation

Saudi’s domestic market vital

Fahad Ibrahim Aljarboa, CEO Saudi Private Aviation, has underlined the importance of Saudi Arabia’s domestic market.

Speaking during the MEBAA conference yesterday, he said: “We have a population of 34 million and Saudi Arabia covers more than 1.4 million sqkm. There is huge demand from the local market.”

Noting that ‘vision 2030’ is still seven years away, he added that the national strategy for aviation, which was introduced in 2021, “has already transformed the private aviation landscape, while new visa rules now mean it’s possible to secure a tourist or business visa within minutes of applying”.

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Jet trails to greener skies

It may not be on view on the static for a few years yet, but Embraer has revealed its latest aircraft concepts powered by new technologies and renewable energies, as part of the company's initiative to get the aviation industry to net-zero by 2050.

Over the last year, Embraer has been focusing on two 19-30-seater designs for hybrid electric and hydrogen electric propulsion.

The study combined 50 years of technical expertise, input from airlines and joint studies with engine OEMs, to develop two options towards a technically realistic and economically feasible pathway to net-zero – the Energia hybrid and the Energia H2 fuel cell.

While still at the evaluation phase, the architectures and technologies are being assessed for technical and commercial viability. The Energia advisory group has also been launched to harness



Sustainability on the radar: The Energia family of aircraft

Embraer

inputs and collaboration from partner airlines.

“As new propulsion technologies will be first applied on smaller aircraft, Embraer is in a unique position. The 19 and 30 seaters are sensible starting points for focused studies since they are likely to present earlier technical and economical readiness,” said Luis Carlos Affonso, senior VP

of engineering, technology and corporate strategy.

“While the challenges of net-zero are significant, in less than 25 years our commercial aircraft have already reduced fuel burn and CO₂ emissions by almost 50% on a seat/mile basis, using only conventional fuels and propulsion. I’m convinced net-zero is a goal we can reach.”

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

SAIE expands into the private aviation sector

SAIE – the MRO arm of the Saudia Group – is expanding its activities to provide maintenance support to business and the private aviation sector. Historically, the company has been focused on engineering services for the national carrier's expanding fleet.

But this year, with the development of a multi-million dollar MRO village in Jeddah, SAIE is growing into a regional centre of expertise for MRO services, in conjunction with industry partners providing services at the centre. The village is set to open next year.

Saudi Arabia's leading private aviation operator, Alpha Star, has become the first sector customer for SAIE, with the two businesses inking a deal at the MEBAA show.

Captain Fahd H Cynndy, SAIE's chief executive, and Alpha Star Aviation Services' CEO, Abdunnasser Alkheraif, signed the agreement for SAIE to support the Alpha Star fleet of private jets, with a view to build capacity for the future expansion to the business jet market.

Alkheraif, said: “It is a proud moment for Alpha Star to collaborate with SAIE; it will enable us to perfect our maintenance planning with peace of mind.”

The new MRO village is committed to using the latest digital technologies to ensure efficient operations.

During MEBAA SAIE also signed a partnership agreement with Ubisense, the Cambridge UK-based location intelligence platform provider, to embark on an innovative digitalization initiative.

The Ubisense SmartSpace® platform will be applied to create ‘smart hangars’ at SAIE.

In partnership with Ubisense, SAIE will build a precise real-time digital-twin of hangar operations, enabling unprecedented levels of visibility, control and audit of process.



With over 25 years of experience, we are one of the leading and fast-growing MRO providers for business and commercial aviation. The company is EASA Part-145 approved, offering services of the highest level.

Our technical team has countless hours of expertise working with Challenger, Global, Embraer Legacy and Hawker aircraft and GE CF34-3 engines.

Key services:

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- Interior Refurbishment
- Engine Overhaul

Location:

- Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC)
- Riga, Latvia (European Union)

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JBT eyes green growth in the UAE

While the business aviation sector across the Middle East is seeing an increase in traffic, JBT Corporation, which specialises in ground support equipment (GSE), reports additional interest in its ‘green’ GSE solutions.

“There is a big focus on more sustainable operations across the region as customers look to reduce their emissions,” said John North, JBT's area manager

Dubai. JBT has a range of GSE, including tow tractors. Its Electro 8950, which features hybrid diesel/electric on-board charging options, caters for a range of aircraft, from small business jets all the way up to a 737.

“We’re also developing a prototype for electric washers, in response to demand from ground handlers in the Middle East,” North added.



MySky's co-founder and global strategy director, Christopher Marich

MySky's tech solution for a quick quote

Having opened an office in Dubai in July, financial management solutions company, MySky, is eager to grow the local market's understanding of the benefits of digitising the financial management side of business aviation.

The unprecedented demand for charter flights has seen operators struggling to handle the high volume of quote requests.

Designed for charter operators,

MySky Quote automatically generates a quote for any given charter using real-time global cost data based on airport fees, FBO fees, fuel uplift, navigation charges and local taxes.

"With MySky, the calculation is automated rather than someone at the charter company spending hours on it manually," explained Christopher Marich, co-founder and global strategy director, MySky.

The tool can churn out quote calculations in less than 10 seconds with more than 96% accuracy.

The financial management tool also allows for 'auto quoting', whereby MySky sends the quote back to the customer on Avinode, the online marketplace for private charter, automatically without owner approval.

"The customers in Europe that have used this function have found they are able to respond to a multitude of charter requests within seconds," said Marich.

Strategic location

Commenting on the company's expansion in the Middle East (it also has offices in Geneva and New York), Marich said:

"Dubai is a strategic location in a powerful region and we're really looking to scale up our operations and make this our operational centre for EMEA.

"We currently have 30 people working for us here and we plan to double that number in early next year.

"There is huge potential still in the region's business aviation and private charter market, so it's important that we have a presence here."

Although the company only opened its Dubai headquarters less than six months ago, Marich underlined: "We're not the new kids on the block anymore. We are working with major financial institutions, governments and OEMs.

"We have built up that trust with customers and we're helping to change the way they think about their data and their finances when it comes to private charter operations and business aircraft ownership."

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Inside story: The large art feature wall was the starting-point of the concept and is an original artwork painted directly on to the bulkhead

Global 5000 displays an arty refurb

London-based aviation and yacht interior specialist, Winch Design, has transformed a 10-year-old Bombardier Global 5000 into a moving art gallery with an interior refurbishment that features a striking red and blue artwork.

The design certainly fulfils the brief from the client to create a bright, characterful and very personal space.

The large art feature wall was the starting point of the concept and is an original artwork painted directly on to the bulkhead using fully certified materials. The bold colours and abstract detail provide an arresting focus to

the lounge upon entering the cabin.

The interior was completed using colours drawn from the art piece, with subtle geometric shapes incorporated into the custom tufted carpet and embossed stitched leather bulkheads. The seats were re-styled using high-quality leathers in pale colours to introduce a fresh and lighter feel to the cabin.

The aircraft was completed with the interior installation and maintenance carried out by Bombardier UK, and all interior cabin refurbishment by the AeroVisto team in Switzerland.

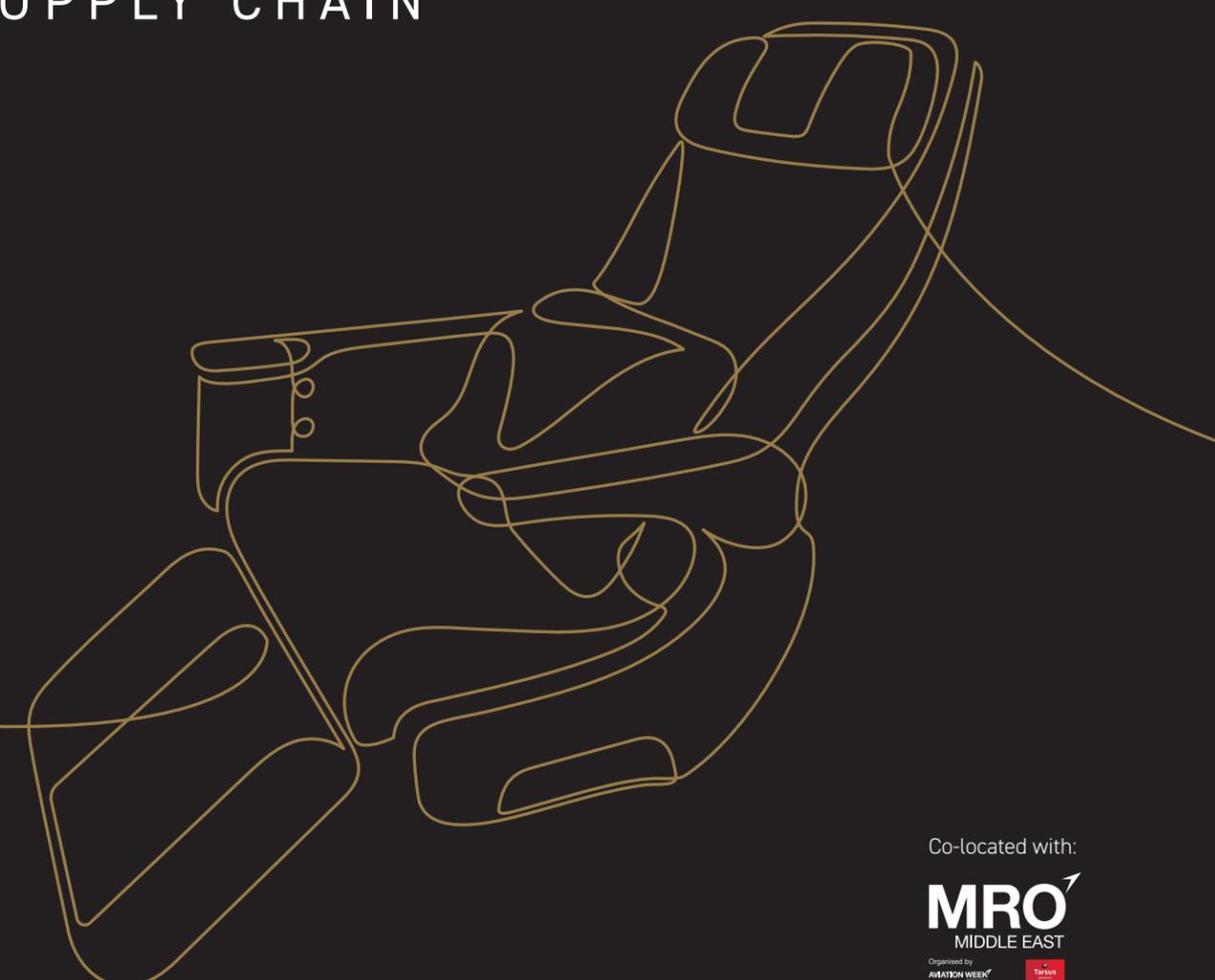


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