



SHOW BUSINESS



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GCAA tells MEBAA new framework is here

REGULATOR LOOKS TO SMOOTH WAY FOR GA



The UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) has listened to calls from the business aviation industry and yesterday announced it is introducing a new framework of regulations and processes designed to simplify life for operators.

The package, described as "a comprehensive support framework for business and private aviation", is designed to cut the amount of time required for private aviation companies to start or amend operations in the country.

The move comes as the UAE sees a continuing increase in demand for premium transport experiences, the GCAA's assistant director-general for aviation safety affairs, Aqeel Ahmed Al Zarouni, said.

The new package will cut the time, and thus costs, associated with operating in the country. For example, acquiring an Air Operators Certificate (AOC) has traditionally taken up to 18 months. This will be cut to as little as six months, assuming the applicant is geared up to provide the necessary information to the GCAA in support of its bid.

Additionally, the GCAA will appoint a dedicated 'ambassador' for the private aviation sector "to personalise support to operators, with a

single point of contact for seamless communication and assistance", Al Zarouni said.

A new business aviation advisory council will also be created to improve links between operators and the regulator.

The new package aims to strike a balance between streamlining processes and upholding the UAE's high standards of security and safety.

Asked whether the new package had been introduced to fend off increasing competition from Saudi Arabia in the aviation sector, Al Zarouni said: "We cannot ignore competition, but competition is healthy. Competition is something we encourage... regardless of whether it is for business aviation, or aviation in totality."

An indication of the UAE's desire to increase its attractiveness to the business jet sector came in his comment that the country aims to double, or even triple, the current 87 private aviation aircraft on the country's register "in a short time frame".

While the GCAA has issued a significant number of improvements and enhancements to regulations governing the business aviation sector over the past year, there was always room for further improvement, he said. This would be one of the roles for the new business aviation advisory council. ▲

ON MESSAGE

Aqeel Ahmed Al Zarouni reveals new support plan

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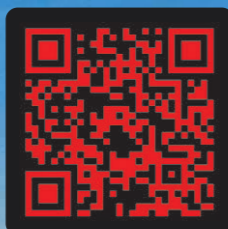

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It's a milestone neo direction for RoyalJet



Chadi Saade, president of ACJ (left) with Shafiu Syed, CEO of RoyalJet

It has only taken 10 years of negotiations, but Abu Dhabi-based Royal Jet – the largest operator of Boeing Business Jets—is moving away from Boeing with an MoU yesterday for three Airbus ACJ 320neo aircraft, and options for six more.

“The business aviation market and the demand for private jets are growing,” said Shafiu Syed, CEO of RoyalJet. “As part of our unwavering commitment to provide the RoyalJet brand of service excellence to customers, we are constantly looking at how we can further elevate our level of service

and add a new dimension into our market offering.

“We are looking forward to progressing this deal in the near future and be able to deliver a whole new travel experience to customers,” he said.

When asked why the switch to Airbus, Syed said: “Some of it was around diversification, but actually, the whole negotiation with Airbus with the right people in place, with the right pricing structure – it seemed to tick all the boxes for us.”

Chadi Saade, president of Airbus Corporate Jets, said: “As a leader

in the premium private aviation sector, we are delighted with RoyalJet's decision to select the ACJ for its next chapter in its growth.

“The ACJ320neo, with its unmatched cabin space, superior comfort, and cutting-edge technology, will enable RoyalJet to provide exceptional travel experiences for its customers, at the lowest fuel burn of any aircraft in its class.

“It is the perfect choice for connecting business leaders where it matters, when it matters – fostering trade, collaboration, and innovation across.”



Alpha Star takes second Latitude

Here at MEBA, Alpha Star Aviation Services and Textron Aviation celebrated the delivery of the Saudi Arabian operator's second Cessna Citation Latitude, which took place at the company's Wichita factory yesterday. Alpha Star already operates one Latitude and a Beechcraft King Air 360C for medevac missions.

At the presentation, from left to right: Ibrahim Al-Yahey, vice-president aircraft management, Alpha Star Aviation Services; Abdulnaser Al Kheraif, CEO, Alpha Star; David De Kock, regional sales director, Textron Aviation; and Robert Molsbergen of Tahakom Investment Company.

Airline Support Baltic opens new hangars

The team at the Airline Support Baltic stand are happy to announce the company's expansion, with the opening of two new hangars – one in Miami and one here at DWC. Lisa Tymoshenko, PR Manager, said: “Currently we are offering line maintenance in Dubai, but we will shortly be able to provide all of our services, all under one roof.”

This will include the aircraft interiors for which they are renowned. Tymoshenko said: “We create interiors from scratch at our headquarters in Riga, Latvia. We are delighted to work with new customers in the Middle East region, but for now the work will be done at our established base.”

The facility in Latvia offers inspiration for harmonious design, as it is set amidst thick forests. Tymoshenko explained: “Latvia offers so many advantages, but also great cost efficiency. As well as aviation professionals, we have skilled creatives and artists who work with the natural materials and are known for their handicrafts and unique style. Our passionate and talented team are our strongest asset.”

The Riga facility handles around six big design projects per year, with capacity for two large jets at any one time. The team ensures that each owner is kept informed of the development of their bespoke design, no matter where they are.

Tymoshenko said: “With so much invested, we ensure there is no space for disappointment.”



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Mixjet sees growing demand for SAF

For Mixjet, MEBA is a vehicle to showcase its brand, and distinguish itself in a highly-competitive market. For Evgeny Shadov, chief commercial officer, that is about putting a personal touch to every operation.

Shadov said: "We work hard to ensure that, and it shows in our client retention rates over five to 10 years. Our ops teams go to great effort to make our service special, and in areas such as fuel costs, we are able to make a difference by managing and maintaining direct contacts with fuel companies."

In an industry that can be highly price sensitive, those fuel costs can make or break a deal, and the increasing requirement for SAF has caused some consternation. Shadov said: "We are seeing a growing demand for SAF in private jets, and our fuel team have been working to guarantee that it is available as far as possible. However, it is very difficult, as the clients are also asking for ever cheaper fuel prices, and SAF is still very expensive. It is a challenge to find that balance."

Euro Jet streamlines bizjet support

Offering trip support services, Euro Jet operates a network covering 44 airports across the Balkan region, operating 11 VIP crew lounges and six ramp vehicles at the most frequented airports. An exhibitor at this year's show, it is now hoping to expand its presence in the Middle East, supporting corporate jet customers on flights to and from Albania, Kosovo and the Balkans.

UAS and Leon sign software trip support deal

Trip support solutions provider UAS International Trip Support (UAS) signed an MoU at the show yesterday with Leon Software to integrate its trip management technology. The 24/7 integration ensures that flight crews and operators can manage everything – from trip creation to flight planning – within a single unified system.

Green Power on display

Serbian company Green Power Turbine Systems is gearing up for the design, certification and production of two new aircraft models – the AT-01 four-seat, single-engine trainer, and the P2P-2025, an eight-seat, twin-engine aircraft for training, utility and cargo missions.

Both will be powered by the TPE 200 turboprop engine also being developed and manufactured by

Green Power, said Goran Memon, senior principal engineer.

Green Power, which is a subsidiary of EdePro, a specialist in propulsion systems for rockets, UAVs and missiles, is a new exhibitor at MEBA. It sees good potential for both aircraft in the African, Middle East and Southeast Asia markets, said Memon.

The prototype 200kW TPE 200 engine first flew on a helicopter

test bed in mid-2023 and is slated to enter the EASA certification process in early 2025, said Aleksandar Pantovic, head of product development and design.

The aircraft will be developed simultaneously on the same timelines with the plan to have prototypes in build by mid-2025, first flights in 2026 and first deliveries to customers in 2027, said Pantovic.



TOP TEAM

From left: Milutin Petkovic, general manager; Goran Memon; and Aleksandar Pantovic

BillyPix

Tahseen sees Yemen situation improving

The improving geopolitical situation in Yemen means a potential boost to the country's aviation prospects.

Tahseen Aviation Services, which has offices in both the capital Sana'a and the country's main economic hub in Aden, as well as an operation in Dubai, provides facilities for a range of international organisations in the country.

The country's civil war means that much of Tahseen's work involves arranging landing permits, ground-handling and fuel services for organisations such as the United Nations, Red Cross and Medecins Sans Frontieres, said CEO Abdulla Almutareb. It also arranges overflight permits for any airlines transiting the country's airspace.

However, with the gradually-improving political situation, there are hopes that peace, perhaps in the form of a federal solution or a new government, will allow Tahseen and other aviation companies to return to providing more normal aviation services.



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DCAF boosting fleet numbers

Holger Ostheimer, managing director of DC Aviation Al-Futtaim is a busy man, especially during the MEBAA show. As well as taking part in the BizAv Talks panels, he is sharing the news of the expansion of the company's charter fleet in Dubai.

This has now grown to 14 aircraft, with the introduction of a Bombardier Global 7500 – one of only two available for charter in the Middle East – a Bombardier Global XRS, Challenger 604, two Hawker 4000 jets and a Pilatus PC-12.

Ostheimer said: "We have been

welcoming clients into the managed aircraft fleet, with additional third party charter capability, and continue to expand our wide offering to meet the high demand for both long-haul and regional charter."

He added: "Dubai continues to be a very active marketplace, compared to the European domain, with a strong interest coming from the surrounding countries, as well as those residing here."

"This is creating opportunities on the ground-handling side, as well aircraft management and

aircraft maintenance, which is an area where we have expanded our capabilities, with added resources and know how in the workforce."

"Over the last two years we have doubled our man hours overall, and that is a trend we are looking to replicate over the next two years."

With active growth in Dubai, and growing business in India and Saudi Arabia, Ostheimer is also looking at the potential for geographical expansion, but remains enigmatic.

He said: "Saudi is surely an interesting market, and if the stars



▲ Holger Ostheimer – expanding the fleet

align perfectly, we may be considering establishing a presence in the Kingdom as well."

VistaJet enters new era

With this year marking VistaJet's 20th anniversary, the global business aviation company offering subscription-based access to a fleet of private jets, is poised for its next chapter of growth and innovation.

"Our unique offering is providing the benefits of private aircraft ownership, without the need to own an aircraft," said Youssef Mouallem, executive vice president of VistaJet.

Headquartered in Dubai, VistaJet has spent the last two decades expanding its global footprint, fleet, commercial teams and service

hubs. "We operate a fleet predominantly comprised of Bombardier jets," Mouallem explained while onboard one of the company's 18 flagship Global 7500 aircraft.

Boasting ultra-long range capabilities, the Global 7500 can fly 17 hours non-stop and features a private suite, exemplifying the luxury and functionality VistaJet prioritises.

In recent years, the company has further diversified its fleet, incorporating Embraer and Gulfstream aircraft. VistaJet's total fleet now numbers 240 jets.



Youssef Mouallem, VistaJet, onboard a flagship Global 7500

Dubai MRO services become globally attractive

It is 18 months since ExecuJet MRO Services moved to their new facility here at Dubai World Central. Business has been good, and with the new paint shop agreement with Satys adding to their offering, Nick Weber, regional vice president, ExecuJet MRO Services, expects it to get busier.

He said: "As business aviation evolved over the last 20 years and more, a lot of the aircraft and the crews were European based and used to take the aircraft back to Europe for maintenance. But we started to see the installed bases staying within region."

"Now, with our new facility all under one roof, it's easier to manage, more efficient, everything is more streamlined and we are

seeing European aircraft coming to the Middle East for maintenance, as we are able to cater for their inspections, even the large inspections. We are tapping into a market that historically has tapped into this region."

While the range of MRO services available in Dubai is growing, there are still some pain points.

Weber said: "The challenge we still face is pricing, much as Europe does compared with the States. The pricing for full exterior refurbishment in the US may be 75 per cent of the cost at a European facility."

"It will be the same here, we will be a touch higher, but as there's more depth in the Middle East MRO services generally it is going to attract more operators. I have

no doubt that in 10 years' time the Middle East will be thriving, not only in supporting the installed base, which is growing rapidly, but globally attractive."

ExecuJet MRO Services is expanding in other areas.

Weber added: "We have recently acquired EASA Global 7500 approval – so we are expanding on our offering in terms of the aircraft we support and we continue to look at opportunities."

"Our back shops is an area we want to grow, in terms of wheel shop, avionics, battery shop, sheet metal structure shops and the NDT department, as the amount of NDT available in this region is limited and the expertise has still got to grow. So we are finding that there is big demand."

Region could emerge as SAF hub

The Middle East holds significant potential to emerge as a global leader in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production, according to Kennedy Ricci, president 4Air, who led a panel yesterday.

"In line with Vision 2030, SAF is really the future of aviation fuel," he said. Ricci highlighted the region's competitive advantage, noting that the main cost driver for SAF is affordable energy.

"The Middle East is uniquely positioned for this, with ADNOC already producing SAF and major initiatives like the collaboration between Masdar and TotalEnergies on a new SAF production plant paving the way to increase production," he added.



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Skyplan looks to expand training capabilities

Having built a solid reputation supporting flight operations and trip services for corporate and commercial aviation, Skyplan, which has its regional headquarters in Dubai, is promoting its Skyplan Aviation Academy (SAA) at the show.

The education arm of Skyplan, SAA, which opened in October 2022 in the Dubai Airport Free Zone, provides a “comprehensive training programme for flight operations and flight dispatch that includes classroom training and on the job training using our world-class flight planning system, Skyplan Aurora 2.0, to provide experience in a real world environment,” said Sunam Datta, CCO and head of training and examination at SAA.

Accredited by GCAA and following ICAO standards, the academy offers an extensive range of programmes covering all aspects of advanced flight operations, from basic theory to advanced practical training.

“Our mission is to provide our students with the best possible experience and training so that they can reach their full potential as aviation professionals,” added Datta. “Around 60 students have already completed their recurrent and initial training and we’re looking forward to welcoming the next batch in February,” continued Datta.

“Flight dispatch and flight operations are a key ele-

ment of trip support, covering everything required to operate a flight from one airport to another. We have students from across GCC and neighbouring countries and are now looking to expand our training facilities in India and Africa following our successful participation at Aviation Africa and Aviation India earlier this year,” added Lampies Enslin, chief instructor, SAA.



▲ Lampies Enslin, chief instructor, SAA, (left) with Sunam Datta, CCO and head of training and examination at SAA

Fit for purpose – showcasing ways to breathe easier

LovinFit is transforming the future of health in a ‘natural’ way with its non-invasive, cutting-edge technologies and delegates and visitors to MEBAA can view and test out some of them, including its hyperbaric oxygen chamber.

“Hyperbaric oxygen therapy involves spending periods in chambers with pressure higher than

ambient pressure while breathing an oxygen-enriched mixture.

“This treatment allows the assimilation of up to 25 times more oxygen than treatments at ‘normal’ pressures,” explained Christian Orlandi, CEO.

“The lungs collect more oxygen than would be possible by breathing in pure air at normal air pres-

sure, resulting in an oxygen enrichment in the plasma up to 25 times greater than normal with obvious and significant health benefits.”

Orlandi said the company has worked very closely with medical experts to produce its turnkey solutions.

The Italian company, which has an office in Dubai as well as China, also offers red-light solutions – an ultra-intensive treatment for well-being, muscle stimulation, anti-ageing, increased energy and improved skin and mood, and cryotherapy.

“Of course, it makes sense to showcase here,” said Orlandi. “Imagine having a long flight, say for a business meeting, then having a cryotherapy session, which involves exposing the entire body or parts of it to cold temperatures for two to five minutes, and you will then feel totally rejuvenated to either head to your meeting or get back on your jet to your next destination.”



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Demand growing in Africa as AfBAA praises founder

The African Business Aviation Association (AfBAA) held its annual meeting on the sidelines of the MEBAA show in Dubai yesterday – and there was a surprise for the association’s founder, Tarek Ragheb.

Egyptian-born Ragheb has been a familiar face in the region through a previous role with Gulfstream, where he delivered more than a billion dollars of sales.

AfBAA chair, Alcinda Pereira, surprised Ragheb at the event by presenting him with an award of appreciation for his work with the association and nominating him to become president of the group.

“Tarek has demonstrated exceptional commitment and unwavering dedication to our cause,” she said. “His tireless work, innovative ideas and inspiring leadership have been essential in achieving the goals we have set.”

Pereira stressed the importance of the industry and said there has been a significant increase in demand for executive aviation services across Africa.

“This is a testament to the potential we possess and the confidence the world places in us. However, with this growth come challenges, such as the need for adequate infrastructure, regulations that keep pace with the evolution of the industry and the ongoing training of our professionals,” she said.

“Our association plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges.”



▲ AfBAA chair Alcinda Pereira prepares to spring a surprise award on Tarek Ragheb



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Victor launches world's first Arabic on-demand jet charter app

The world's first Arabic jet charter app has been launched by global on-demand aircraft charter company Victor. The company, which established new headquar-

ters in Abu Dhabi in April 2024, after becoming a subsidiary of Serenity Aviation Holding, has seen a 166 per cent growth in bookings from clients across the

UAE over the last seven months.

Simon D'Oyly, general manager, Victor MENA, said: "Under our new ownership we felt it important to truly be Arabic. Many companies say they are from the Middle East, but continue to operate completely in English, with expatriate staff.

"We want to work in Arabic and help develop a new generation of skilled Emirati staff. This is essential if we are to pursue local government contracts and continue to expand in the region. We respect that the official language of the GCC is Arabic."

For Victor, the app is just the first step. D'Oyly added: "The app is the starting point. We are working on providing quotes, contracts and press releases in Arabic.

"Our pitch is that Victor is a better way to fly. This should be reflected through all levels of the business – to the environment through our commitment to SAF and with respect for the local culture.

The new app will also provide full transparency in what can often be an opaque jet charter booking process. Victor is challenging the industry by giving customers specific information about their booking.

The new app enables customers to request, book and fly within hours, offering fast airport searches combined with one-touch luggage, passenger and pet filters. It also features Victor Deals – exclusive discounted rates on preferred routes.



APPY DAYS

Victor's senior sales executive Vadim Smith shows off the App

Long-life flowers are bloom-ing marvellous!

Imagine buying a bouquet of stunning flowers that will last a year. Well, exhibiting at MEBAA is a company that do just that. In Bloom produces real, bio-preserved flowers and plants.

"We are Dubai's first eternal flowers boutique, specialising in real, bio preserved flower arrangements and bouquets," said Alexandra Chechneva, general manager.

"Combining artistic flower arranging with the latest technology in floricultural science, we create bouquets of sustainable long-life flowers – real natural flowers that have undergone a unique bio preservation process to stay looking and feeling fresh for at least 12 months."

Chechneva explained that her love of flowers, but 'sadness' of them wilting, gave her the idea.

"We aim to reduce the immense environmental impact of the perishable flower industry, without sacrificing the incomparable experience of having real flowers in your vases," she said.

"Our flowers, which include a range from roses to hydrangeas and orchids, are cut at their most

perfect shape and treated with a specific mixture of 100% plant-based, biodegradable preservation formula.

"The formula replaces the flower's natural properties effectively creating a unique and 100% natural product that will stay fresh for

months on end, without the need for watering or light, which offers a sustainable alternative to fresh flowers, as well as being cheaper."

Chechneva said the company is at MEBAA as its luxury brand ties in well with the business aviation market.



FLOWER POWER

Alexandra Chechneva of In Bloom which specialises in real, bio preserved bouquets



Luxaviation's David Van Den Langenberg (right) and IBAC head Kurt Edwards

Luxaviation joins IBAC

Luxaviation Group has put pen to paper and joined the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) industry partner programme here at MEBAA. David Van Den Langenberg, chief industry affairs officer, signed on behalf of the Luxembourg-company.

As the 19th organisation, and the fourth company from Europe to join the programme, Luxaviation will play a key role in supporting IBAC's global initiatives to drive safety, sustainability, and growth in business aviation, said IBAC. With more than 1,300 employees, Luxaviation Group operates, manages, and charts one of the world's largest fleets of private jets.

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Aoife O'Sullivan: "There is increased interest in business aviation"

Flying high: A refreshing take on business aviation regulations

The UAE offers a refreshing perspective on business aviation, according to Aoife O'Sullivan, partner at The Air Law Firm, which has a strong client base in the UAE.

"The region has always been important to us, but there has been a marked change over the last

12 months in terms of increased interest in business aviation. It's exciting as there seems to be plenty of interest from regulators reaching out and getting into arrangements with the rest of the international community," she said.

Adding that it is refreshing to

see regulators and governments in the Middle East embrace business aviation, O'Sullivan added that in the UK and Europe the industry often faces growing anti-aviation sentiment, making the UAE's "supportive environment a welcome change".

She underlined the region's financial landscape is also evolving positively.

"Financing private aviation used to be challenging; however the money is now firmly rooted in the region, with financial institutions lending locally and responsibly, fostering a more robust market," she continued.

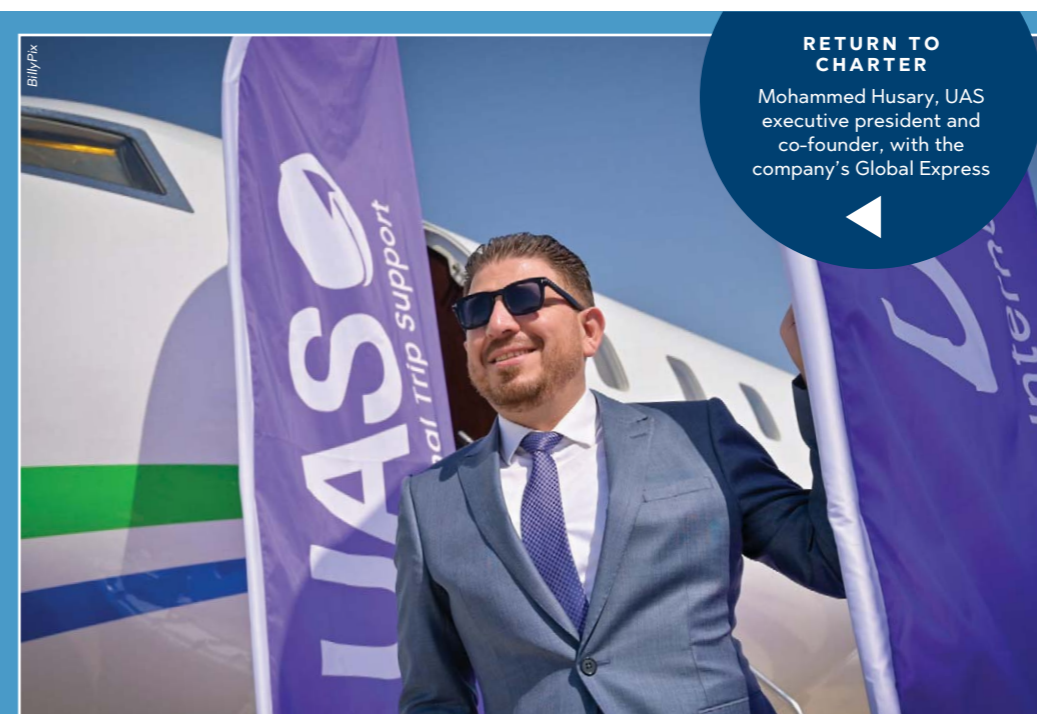
She also emphasised that English law's widespread appreciation across Gulf jurisdictions also facilitates smoother transactions, particularly in markets like Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Additionally, the UAE is streamlining processes around aircraft registration, inspections, and regulatory compliance. "This proactive approach, combined with a focus on industry growth, creates an exciting and efficient environment for private aviation to thrive."

The debate, she concluded, is around the preference for offshore registries versus onshore registries. "Ultimately, the key elements everyone looks for in a registry are ease of access and flexibility – being able to reach someone outside of standard hours when urgent matters arise," she added.

"From a legal standpoint, my priority is for registries to focus on their core role as safety regulators and perform that function effectively. In Dubai, that's undoubtedly the case – the regulatory bodies here are highly respected.

"Whether other countries in the region will develop their own business aviation registries remains uncertain, but I can see Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia taking steps in that direction. It's an exciting space with potential for further evolution."



RETURN TO CHARTER

Mohammed Husary, UAS executive president and co-founder, with the company's Global Express

UAS makes a move into management and charter

As well as a busy stand, Dubai-based UAS International Trip Support has a presence on the static, displaying the aircraft that marks the company's return to the business aircraft management and charter market.

Mohammed Husary, executive president and co-founder, said: "We launched with trip support in 2000 and have become a global leader. We always had an option for charter, and used to lease a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, but it was complicated, as we did not want to

upset our clients by competing with them.

"However, there has been a change in the industry, and a growing demand in the region for both aircraft management and charter."

The Bombardier Global Express on display is the first aircraft in the company's managed fleet and is based at Sharjah International Airport with flight bookings available through the UAS charter division.

Husary explained: "We will continue to operate a managed fleet,

as our strategy is to remain asset light, but we aim to bring all sizes of aircraft into the fleet to cater for all demands, from long-haul BBJ and A319 aircraft to Hawker 800XP and Challenger 350s for regional use."

UAS will base the fleet out of the UAE for the present but aims to expand in the region in future. Husary said: "The KSA market has a very different dynamic, which needs newer more impressive aircraft. Where the UAE is price sensitive, KSA is more standard sensitive."

Leave plenty of time to wander the static line at MEBA, which features some 30 aircraft, from the super-sized BBJs and ACJ220 to the Cirrus SF50, the smallest jet at the show

Just the business...

Jet black ▶

One of the coolest-looking aircraft on the static line is a Gulfstream G500 in a matt black livery, which the manufacturer has chartered to show the model off at MEBA.



On the nose ▶

As Embraer celebrates its 55th anniversary this year, it has brought some of its most successful aircraft to the static display at MEBA, with the best-selling Phenom 300 and this technologically-advanced, super-midsize Praetor 600 aircraft.



▼ Vroom with a view...

Dubai-based AIX Investment Group, making its debut at the show, has its new Bombardier Global 5000 in a stunning gold livery on the static.

The financial services firm also brought one of its Formula 2 racing cars to MEBA, as showcased by AIX's Anna Kucherenko.

AIX Invest acquired a Formula 2 and a Formula 3 team in May 2024 with the

teams rebranded as AIX Racing.

AIX Invest took delivery of the Global 5000 in March for use as the company's private jet in addition to client transport.

The company is at MEBA to promote its brand and offer its range of financial services and products to the aviation market, said Sergiu Racu, senior associate at AIX Investment.



▲ Cirrus gains momentum in Middle East

The smallest jet here at MEBA is the Cirrus Vision Jet, powered by a single Williams FJ33 turbofan.

While sales of the aircraft have been strong in the US and Europe, with more than 570 in service worldwide and an order backlog of a further 300, it has taken longer to gain a foothold in the Middle East.

That is changing as the Vision Jet becomes an established product, explained Stefano Cestarelli

(pictured), regional sales director of Cirrus Middle East.

He has taken orders for a total of four Vision Jets from customers in Saudi Arabia and the UAE for delivery in the coming two years, he said. There are currently two being flown in this region with the owners operating them in the Middle East in the winter and taking them to Europe in the summer.

"Interest in the Vision Jet is growing here as our clients,

who are mostly owner-pilots flying four-five seat piston-engine aircraft, look to upgrade to becoming a jet pilot with the more comfortable ride, better performance and wider cabin that brings," said Cestarelli.

As more Vision Jets enter service in the region, Cirrus is talking with partners in Saudi Arabia and the UAE to establish service centres for the type over the coming one to two years.

Table talk

Captain Rene Gonzalez takes a few minutes break from showing guests around the Boeing Business Jet he pilots to read the show's official daily newspaper, leaning on one of the smartest reception tables at the show, fashioned from a Boeing 737 winglet. Gonzalez, a former US Air Force pilot who flew the B-52 bomber among his commands, has been with Boeing for 20 years and is currently its BBJ chief test pilot.



Joby and Skyports forge ahead with world's first 'vertiport' in Dubai



Adel Mardini, Jetex founder and CEO (left), and JoeBen Bevirt, Joby founder and CEO, celebrate the partnership

Air taxi manufacturer Joby Aviation is pressing ahead with its plans to create the world's first network of 'vertiports' in Dubai, with its infrastructure partner, Skyports, breaking ground on the first of four sites three weeks ago.

Joby is targeting commercial operations launch with its electric vertical take-off and landing vehicles "as early as the end of 2025", Joby Aviation general manager Anthony El-Khoury said at the show yesterday. The company has a six-year agreement to be the exclusive provider of air taxi operations in the emirate.

The first site is being constructed opposite Emirates Airlines' HQ at Dubai International Airport, said

El-Khoury. There are plans for four initial sites, the others being at Dubai downtown, Dubai Marina and Palm Jumeirah.

It was too early to talk about a timescale for the completion of all four sites, he said. "We'd like to launch the service with at least two nodes and scale up from there. It depends where we are with Skyports and other partners."

However, Joby says its aircraft are suited to handle journeys throughout the UAE, such as Dubai to Abu Dhabi or Ras Al Khaimah.

The company is in the process of obtaining an AOC from the UAE regulator, the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). Asked if Joby would have to negotiate permissions to launch services in the seven emirates individually, El-Khoury said that the AOC would be a federal-level document. "Having said that, I think we're in a regulatory environment that is still nascent," he said.

The GCAA is one of the most progressive regulators internationally, he said, but there was still some uncertainty as to what might be required from each emirate.

Joby electrifies Jetex customers

Joby Aviation and Jetex have announced the signing of a strategic partnership that aims to provide efficient and sustainable connectivity to Jetex customers across the Middle East.

The agreement outlines plans for Joby to install its global electric aviation charging system (GEACS) at Jetex locations in the region, enabling the company to offer commercial passenger services in Joby's electric air taxis connecting Jetex passengers to a network of vertiports, between

emirates and across the wider region.

"At Jetex, sustainability is a key focus of our strategy, and our partnership with Joby represents an important step forward in achieving our vision of greener skies," said Adel Mardini, founder and CEO of Jetex. "We are committed to driving innovation that reduces our industry's environmental impact, and integrating Joby's electric air taxis into our network allows us to deliver cleaner, quieter, and more sustainable travel experiences, starting in the UAE."

ArcosJet stands firm behind Lilium

Despite Lilium's well-publicised financial problems, ArcosJet, the exclusive authorised dealer for private sales of the Lilium Jet in the United Arab Emirates and Cyprus, stands firm in its belief in the company and its product.

Yuri Dzun, head of Lilium dealership development, ArcosJet said: "KPMG is currently helping with the company's restructuring, and we expect news by the end of the year. There are a couple of companies who are interested in joining Lilium, with possible interest from France. I strongly expect this uncertainty will pass."

Dzun is quick to point out that in many ways it is business as usual for the developer of the all-electric

vertical take-off and landing jet. He said: "Lilium is continuing operations and testing. The two test aircraft MSN01 and MSN02 are still in production and testing is ongoing. This is important to fulfil the company's obligation to its stakeholders and its employees."

He also believes that the new aircraft remains on track to gain certification next year and that delivery will go ahead in the second half of 2026.

He said: "Lilium is recognised by EASA as an OEM. There may be some delay in shipments, but we believe in the product and the company. There are 108 confirmed orders – not MoUs, but confirmed orders – eight of which were signed



Yuri Dzun believes the Lilium aircraft is the ideal last mile solution for private jet travellers

last week after news of the insolvency was released. We, as ArcosJet have 10 orders for customers in the Middle East."

Dzun is firm in his certainty that eVTOLs hold the answer to internal connectivity problems in the UAE and beyond, and that Lilium

is the natural companion to private jet travel, offering a last mile solution to customers.

"I believe we will see Lilium aircraft operating in the region by 2027 as on demand connections between the emirates and as a VIP commuter service," he said.

SAVE THE DATES

2025 CONVENTIONS

2025 NBAA Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE)

Oct. 14–16, 2025 | Las Vegas, NV

2025 CONFERENCES & REGIONAL FORUMS

Leadership Conference

Jan. 27–29, 2025 | Amelia Island, FL

Aircraft Transactions Workshop

Jan. 30, 2025 | Amelia Island, FL

International Operators Conference

Feb. 11–13, 2025 | San Juan, Puerto Rico

Orlando Regional Forum

Feb. 26, 2025 | Orlando, FL

Schedulers & Dispatchers Conference

March 25–27, 2025 | New Orleans, LA

Maintenance Conference

April 29–May 1, 2025 | Columbus, OH

Business Aviation Taxes Seminar

May 7, 2025 | Atlanta, GA

White Plains Regional Forum

June 4, 2025 | White Plains, NY

Tax, Regulatory & Risk Management Conference

Oct. 12–13, 2025 | Las Vegas, NV



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