



SHOW BUSINESS



AN ARABIAN AEROSPACE PUBLICATION

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▼
**TOMORROW'S
WORLD, TODAY!**
eVTOLs will thrive in
the city of the future,
says Captain Sulaiman
Almuhaimeedi

eVTOL MANIA!

Saudi and UAE regulators embracing AAM

Saudi Arabia will use the futuristic city of Neom as a testbed for developing advanced air mobility (AAM) concepts, a senior official of the country's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) said yesterday.

The move – announced at the

show – reinforced the view that the Gulf region is at the heart of the development and proving of AAM innovation.

That has been demonstrated here at the Dubai Air Show with extensive debuts of platforms and investment in infrastructure.

“Neom is at the forefront

of any new technology in the Kingdom,” said Captain Sulaiman Almuhaimeedi, GACA’s executive vice-president, aviation safety and environmental sustainability, speaking at the show.

“It will only adopt new technologies. There will be no old technologies there.”

This made it the ideal backdrop against which to test AAM concepts, together with German company Volocopter providing eVTOL aircraft and Skyports, which is developing and operating landing infrastructure as part of Neom’s

▶ CONTINUED ON P5



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CONTINUED FROM P1

eco-system. GACA is also in discussions with several European and US OEMs to create other test-beds in the country, "to ensure we do understand the AAM requirements properly.

"We're taking a holistic approach, considering the differences between operating environments. Europe is different from the US and Saudi Arabia likewise. We're tackling our national requirements to ensure that, when we start commercial operations in urban areas, that we've covered all the challenges." Saudi Arabia is in the process of completing the Saudi Advanced Air Mobility Roadmap, part of the country's overall aviation strategy.

"We've set aspirations and goals, we've completed the design of the strategy and are now detailing it. We're determining initiatives, projects, owners and timelines." Details of the strategy are scheduled to be announced in Q1 2024, Almuhaimeidi said.

Initial surveys in Saudi Arabia indicated that the country's youthful population – more than 60 per cent is 30 years old or less – "are more open to trying those new technologies". The UAE is also pushing to be a proving ground for AAM.

"I think it is our duty as a regulator to look forward to the future and actually who to shape the future for the industry, not the opposite way around," said director general of GCAA, Saif Al Suweidi. "We are participating in many events in many activities in many initiatives. We are engaging with academia, and with the stakeholders here locally, to facilitate the introduction of this new technology. "The future is that and we are strongly believe we have to take the lead." ▲

Ethiopian orders 11 more A350s

Ethiopian Airlines Group has made a firm order for 11 additional Airbus A350-900s to be added to its existing fleet. The aircraft are to be powered by Rolls-Royce engines.

This latest agreement with Airbus takes Ethiopian Airlines' total order book and commitment for the A350 to 33, including four A350-1000s.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said: "As a customer-

focused airline, we are particularly excited for this fleet as it offers extra comfort to passengers with its features like the quietest cabin in its class and ambient lighting.

We are keen to expand our fleet size, acquiring the latest technology aircraft to offer a convenient and memorable onboard experience to our esteemed passengers."

Christian Scherer, Airbus chief commercial officer and head of international, added: "Ethiopian

Airlines is a great example of how to leverage the exceptional values of the A350 for long-haul travel, playing on the benefits of Ethiopia's unique geographical position that offers the fastest connections between China and Latin America."

Ethiopian Airlines currently operates a fleet of 20 A350-900s and with this commitment, it will confirm its position as Africa's biggest A350 customer.

SAMI Aerospace to offer MRO on commercial undercarriages



SAMI Aerospace's Aircraft Accessories and Components Company (AACC) is now 18 months into its four-year partnership agreement with Safran Landing Systems. As part of the agreement, AACC is expanding its maintenance, repair and overhaul capabilities to offer commercial and military rotary landing systems.

AACC is already the national champion for the Saudi military and defence, but see this as further diversification, to drive localisation forward and as part of the company's contribution to 'Saudi Vision 2030'. SAMI Aerospace Mechanics CEO, Mazen M Johar said: "As we have the infrastructure, the team and the undercarriage experience it makes perfect sense to work on the landing systems of civilian aircraft."

Work on the first Airbus A320 undercarriage, in conjunction with Safran, is almost complete. And early next year SAMI Aerospace hopes to gain EASA certification to enable it to work independently.

Johar added: "The A320 will form the bulk of our early landing-system work. There are around 450 commercial aircraft in the GCC region, of which 50 per cent are A320s. Our first order is with a regional carrier, not a Saudi one because of the Saudi's A320 maintenance schedule." The Airbus A330 will play a big part of SAMI's AACC strategy – Saudi has around 30 A330s. There are another 30 in the region, and the Royal Saudi Air Force is operating the A330MRTT multi-role tanker transport.

◀ SAMI CEO Mazen M Johar is now gearing the business up for civilian undercarriage work



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ARC shows off Pegasus and C600 VTOL wonders

VTOL start-up, ARC Aero-systems, is showcasing its Pegasus gyroplane – the only FAA Part 27 and Transport Canada certified VTOL in the world, ahead of its plans to bring the aircraft into production by 2025.

Currently capable of carrying one pilot and one passenger, Seyed Mohseni, CEO, ARC Aerosystems, explained that plans are on track to certify the air taxi for two passengers. One full-size production prototype is currently based at Cranfield Airport in the UK and is ready for orders to be placed with a US\$400,000 price tag.

The VTOL features a jump take-off and zero-roll landing capability and as a gyroplane benefits from free rotation during flight, which increases safety, lowers operating costs by at least 20 per cent compared to similar helicopter models thanks to lower fuel consumption. It also offers lower maintenance costs, as there is no requirement for a gearbox.

In addition to being operated

as an air taxi, the Pegasus is also suitable for use cases including emergency medical services, law enforcement, surveillance, and recreational flying.

ARC Aerosystems is also showcasing its C600, Europe's largest uncrewed VTOL. The fixed-wing VTOL UAV features a 100kg payload and is capable of transporting

cargo deliveries over distances of up to 400km.

With the Middle East a growth region for ARC Aerosystems, Mohseni added he was delighted to sign an MoU with the National Industrial Development Centre (NIDC) in Saudi Arabia to locate manufacturing partners for its VTOL aircraft in the region.



Seyed Mohseni, CEO ARC Aerosystems and Duncan Potter, ARC Aerosystems international sales director with a model of the C600

Korean helicopters make show debut

Two Korean helicopters are making their international airshow debut at Dubai this year, both of them derived from Aerospatiale/Airbus Helicopters designs.

The KUH-1E utility helicopter is being shown off as the maritime KUH – a joint Tawazun/Korean Aerospace Industries product, which is being

shown with a Tawazun weapons package that include both the Alheda and Logir missile systems at the helicopter.

The KUH-1E has Garmin G5000 avionics, a nose-mounted weather radar, and provision for external fuel tanks. The light attack helicopter (LAH) is a dedicated

attack helicopter based on the H155 Dauphin, powered by the Hanwha-built Safran Arriel 2L2 turboshaft. The LAH is still in development, and is expected to enter service with the Korean armed forces next year.



▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Double deal for Frequentis ATM

Frequentis has announced two deals to advance air traffic management (ATM) solutions in the Middle East.

The company has teamed up with Saudi aviation start-up Nera to provide technical and operational solutions that will boost safety, sustainability and efficiency while adhering to international safety standards.

It has also been selected by Saudi Air Navigation Services (SANS) to explore how data analytics and AI can be used to optimise and enhance ATM to meet the demands of growth in Saudia's aviation sector.

L3 Harris waits on Korea decision

L3 Harris is exhibiting a model of its Bombardier Global 6500 conformal airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft it is proposing for the Republic of Korea Air Force (RoKAF) next-gen requirement.

The L3 Harris' Global 6500 is in competition with the Boeing E-7T and Saab GlobalEye for the RoKAF contract, with a decision expected soon.

Soisa to grow Dubai South base

Having opened a facility in Dubai South last year, Soisa Aircraft Interiors is opening a new facility four times the size in the same location. The move is in line with market growth in the region for the Mexico-headquartered company, which specialises in soft furnishings and product development.

TAAG Angola orders GE engines for B787

TAAG Angola Airlines has ordered eight GE Aerospace GEnx-1B engines, plus one spare, to power its incoming fleet of Boeing 787s. The airline ordered four 787s last month.



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Sanad /Thales airports move

Mubadala's aerospace engineering business Sanad is extending its maintenance capabilities into new industry segments.

Speaking at the show yesterday, chief executive Mansoor Janahi, said the company had signed a deal with the European technology giant that expands Sanad's MRO services into the dynamic fields of airport security, air traffic control

and digital operation.

"Our strategic alliance represents a significant milestone in Sanad's journey," Janahi said. "By collaborating with an industry leader, we contribute to sustaining efficient operations at some of the busiest airports in the Middle East and Africa. We aim to shape a more cohesive and collaborative aviation industry rooted in engineering

excellence and technological innovation," he said.

Describing that maintenance market as "seriously fragmented," he said "There is a significant requirement for either the modernisation of airports or the development of new airports.

"We always look at it from a technical/maintenance angle. So, what we see today is that growth is going to happen, whether it is in the region, or even globally."

Sanad and Thales will collaborate closely to enhance air traffic management and advance airport operations in the Middle East and Africa by deploying innovative systems and MRO services.

"Sanad's outstanding global aerospace engineering solutions combined with Thales' high technologies will create prosperous synergies in the field of airport operations and security," said Elias Merrawe, vice president, civil business of Thales in the Middle East.

"As we look to build a future that we can all trust, innovation and knowledge exchange play a vital role in developing a sustainable aviation future," he said.



Our strategic alliance represents a significant milestone, says Sanad's CEO Mansoor Janahi

Emirates network set to mushroom

Emirates will enter a new phase of global network expansion in 2025/26 when its delivery stream of new Airbus A350s and Boeing 787s begin arriving, said Adnan Kazim, chief commercial officer, Emirates Airline.

"All these aircraft will give us access to many routes that today we are not able to do because of the capacity of the A380 and 777-300ER, they are too big," said Kazim. "Africa will be one priority and we can explore more and cover more than the 24 points that we do today," he explained, while there are also several destinations in Eastern Europe on the Emirates radar.

"Furthermore, there are a lot of places in Asia that could be sitting on medium-sized demand, but they are not good for the 777-300ER today," said Kazim.

The same goes for the North American market, where Kazim

sees many new route opportunities, and Latin America, where Emirates only has a handful of routes, is another region under consideration.

"Any planner will be dreaming to have that kind of mix between an A380 to a 777X to a 777-300ER, then to the 350 and 787 – you really have everything, and you can penetrate to any market at any given time, nothing will hold you back [in terms of aircraft availability]," said Kazim.

It is an expansion phase that will carry on to 2031/32, he said.

In terms of market access, Kazim said: "We have almost 95 per cent of the world under a more flexible approach and quite open in terms of anything we want to do. Where we are lacking capacity or constrained a bit are places like India, China, plus France, but we have quite a lot of flexibility to manoeuvre."



Adnan Kazim, CCO, Emirates is looking forward to the airline taking smaller widebodies to launch a major network expansion

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Industry targets shift away from fossil fuel

A shift from fossil fuels to sustainable aviation fuels is possible, necessary and urgent in order to meet the air transport sector's essential climate change commitments, according to Haldane Dodd, the executive director of the cross-industry Air Transport Action Group (ATAG).

Dodd is in the UAE for ICAO's third Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3), which takes place next week, and for the 28th UN climate meeting COP28 in early December, both being held in Dubai.

CAAF/3 is seen as a landmark conference for governments to establish the global policy framework for aviation's drive towards the goal of net zero emissions by 2050. "There are two key outcomes we would like to see from the [CAAF/3] conference. Firstly, a goal for SAF deployment, which can provide investment certainty to the finance markets and influence policy actions around the world," said Dodd.

Egyptair selects Panasonic Avionics' Astrova

Panasonic Avionics has signed an agreement with Egyptair for the installation of its Astrova seat-end solution on the airline's new Airbus A350-900 fleet making it the first airline in Africa to select Astrova. It will be line-fit installed in Egyptair's A350 business class cabins with 19-inch 4K OLED monitors, while 12-inch monitors will be installed in economy class.

AeroGulf and Heliswiss sign MOU

AeroGulf CEO Fahad Khoory and Stéphane Delaye, CEO of Heliswiss International, have signed a memorandum of understanding under which the two companies will create a partnership to provide safe, regular helicopter precision lifting services to major construction projects in Dubai and beyond.



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Neom Bay Airport deal for Collins

Collins Aerospace has been selected by the Innovative Contractors for Advanced Dimensions (ICAD) to streamline services for airport operational and passenger processing systems at Neom Bay Airport in Saudi Arabia.

The deal will see Collins provide its suite of connected airport system products, including its self-service kiosks for check-in and bag drop and travel document verification system. Additionally, flight information displays will be powered by Collins' AirVue system and its AirPlan AODB system will help manage resources and operations.



Collins and ICAD seal the deal: (from left) Collins's Sameh Gaafar, Nicole White and ICAD Holding's Rabih El Sayegh and Paul Farah

The first phase of the multi-million US dollar project is on track to be complete by the end of 2023, while the second phase is due for completion by the end of 2024.

While SITA and Amadeus were also short-listed for the project, Rabih El Sayegh, managing director, ICAD, said: "The project had to be completed within a tight time frame and Collins were able to accommodate that."

The contract marks Collins' first airport collaboration in Saudi Arabia and paves the way for growth in the kingdom. Sameh Gaafar, director, Middle East and Africa, airports and security at Collins Aerospace added: "We've been working in the region for the past two decades and look forward to continued growth as we meet the modernisation needs of airports."

A lightweight altimeter ideal for AAM market

US avionics supplier Freeflight Systems is showing its lightweight radio altimeter, specially designed for advanced air mobility (AAM) vehicles.

The Dallas-based company has developed the altimeter, which weighs just 1.9lb (0.86kg) and is

significantly smaller than existing models, said Freeflight's director of business development, Scott Warner.

"This has made it the market leader for the AAM and UAM markets," he said. "The company has been in business for around 25

years and has built a whole product portfolio for the industry, but we knew we had to develop products in this scale [for AAMs]," Warner said.

Many of the early contenders to build AAM vehicles would not survive to see their products hit the marketplace, "but we truly see that there's a need for this type of transportation. Somewhere in the world, these aircraft are going to be very useful. We see this market as being very validated. "There's only a small percentage that will make it to market, but that's the same as any emerging market."

Next step? "We're going to make [the altimeter] even smaller, even more [suitable] for the UAM market," Warner concluded.



Freeflight's director of business development, Scott Warner with its altimeter

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Flydubai to open MRO facility at Dubai South

Expanding local LCC Flydubai is to build a new MRO facility at Dubai South. Construction of the US\$190m project's hangar and workshops is scheduled to start in 2024 and open for business by the end of 2026.

The airline signed an agreement for the new facility with the Mohammed bin Rashid Aerospace Hub (MBRAH) at the show yesterday.

Flydubai operates an 80-strong fleet of Boeing 737-800s, -8s and -9s. The show saw the carrier signing its first order for widebody aircraft, 30 Boeing 787s. "When it's up and running... the MRO facility will bring us significant reductions in operational costs," said Flydubai's chief operating officer, Mick Hills.

Seastar makes a splash in Middle East

Locally-based Gulf Enterprises, is targeting the region's premium tourist market for Dornier Seawings' amphibious aircraft, the Seastar. Designed to be operated on water, as well as land, the aircraft's all-composite airframe is resistant to extreme environments, including saltwater areas. With test flights currently ongoing, certification is expected by the end of 2024.

Swiss rolling in it

A Swiss national was announced as the latest US\$1 million winner in the Dubai Duty Free Millennium Millionaire at the draw held yesterday at the show.

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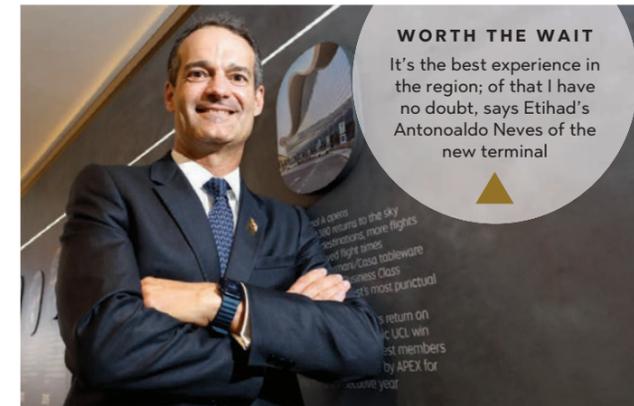
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'Spectacular' new Abu Dhabi terminal



WORTH THE WAIT
It's the best experience in the region; of that I have no doubt, says Etihad's Antonio Neves of the new terminal

Etihad Airways' CEO, Antonio Neves, has detailed the differences that Abu Dhabi International Airport's new midfield terminal will make to the airline's operations and the passenger experience.

The much-delayed terminal, which opened for business earlier this month, is spectacular, Neves said at the show. "It's the best experience in the region; of that I have no doubt.

"It's designed in a way that means it doesn't feel that large, but at the same time it's roomy, it's luxurious, it's an amazing piece of architecture." The new building will

also be notably more efficient, said Neves. Passengers will no longer have to be bussed to and from aircraft and direct power linkages from the building to parked aircraft will mean they no longer have to use their onboard auxiliary power units, or ground power carts to provide cooling and electrical power, thus saving emissions.

The efficiencies also mean that Etihad can cut connecting times by 10-15 minutes and the airport's increased annual capacity – rising from 27 million passengers to 45 million – will enable Etihad to embark on major growth plans.

Boeing prepared to outsource production

Boeing has both the F-15EX Eagle II and KC-46 in the static display at the show, and is keen obviously to sing the virtues of both.

The Middle East is a sizeable market, even for a defence business as big as Boeing. As Ted Colbert, president and chief executive officer of Boeing Defence, space and security said: "About 40 per cent of our sales backlog is outside of the US, mainly through US government contracts.

"In this region, Saudi, UAE and Kuwait are very big partners of ours, and modernising their defence capabilities and products is very important."

Boeing has a variety of aircraft operating in the region – Apaches, Chinooks, C-17A Globemaster IIIs, F-15 Eagles, F/A-18 Hornets and UAVs. "Providing readiness and training for these are two of my main objectives," he said.

Both UAE and Saudi Arabia want to see more manufacturing in their countries, as part of any defence purchase, but would Boe-

ing be prepared to follow that line?

Colbert responded: "Of course. We have models around the world where we have set-up manufacturing partnerships.

"In India, for example, we work well with Tata in Hyderabad. We have delivered several different parts to support the Apache production [as part of the Indian military's Apache purchase] there

and have seen 109 fuselages sent to Mesa [where the AH-64E is assembled] for final assembly.

"It really is about bringing together a capability that supports the country or even the region. Boeing did something similar with the MQ-28 [Ghost Bat] in Australia, where a purpose-built autonomous capability is being created."



READY TO GO
Providing readiness and training for these are two of my main objectives, Ted Colbert

NEWS IN BRIEF

Empire strikes gold in San Marino

Dubai-based Empire Aviation Group has been awarded a CAR continuing airworthiness management organisation (CAMO) certificate by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) at the Republic of San Marino – the first awarded to an operator based in the Middle East.

The San Marino CAR CAMO approval certificate confirms that Empire Aviation is approved by the CAA to perform CAMO function work on private aircraft managed by Empire Aviation and/or any other aircraft not on the company's managed fleet and also based internationally.

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Bestfly acquires Gulfstream G550 in bid to bolster fleet

Angola’s Bestfly and Jet Finance have completed the finance and purchase by Bestfly of a Gulfstream G550 business jet.

“Our current long-range Gulfstream’s, Bombardier Globals, and our Falcon 900 have been instrumental in establishing an operating presence in the Middle East,” said Alcinda Pereira, Bestfly’s execu-

tive director. “We see even more opportunities and need to grow the VIP charter fleet.”

Nuno Pereira, Bestfly’s chairman and group CEO, added: “We have seen a need for a stronger fleet position for Bestfly in the Middle East and this next acquisition gives us the added capacity we need to meet the demand.”

▲ Bestfly is pursuing added capacity to strengthen its fleet position: pictured at the show, chairman and group CEO Nuno Pereira

▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Action Aviation salutes Hamish Harding

Action Aviation has paid tribute to its founder and former chairman, Captain Hamish Harding during the Dubai Air Show. Harding was among five crew who died on the Titan submersible’s tragic voyage to the Titanic shipwreck in June. Action Aviation held an event in his name this week at Atlantis The Royal, bringing together his colleagues, partners, and friends. The company, which Harding founded in Dubai in 2004, is now being led by Mark Butler and managing director, Frederic Dubant.



▲ Tributes have been paid to Hamish Harding



▲ **ELECTRIC DREAMS**
Captain Raman Oberoi (left) with Mark Henning of AutoFlight at the show

Falcon and AutoFlight to pursue AAM strategy

Mark Robert Henning, the managing director of AutoFlight Europe, and Captain Raman Oberoi, chief operating officer of Falcon Aviation Services, signed an agreement at the show committing the companies to collaboratively pursue an innovative advanced air mobility (AAM) strategy in the United Arab Emirates and across the region.

AutoFlight is a leading designer and manufacturer of advanced

autonomous eVTOL aircraft including the state-of-the-art electric Prosperity aircraft and its unmanned cargo derivative, the CarryAll.

Falcon Aviation Services (FAS) is a leading business aviation and helicopter services operator in the Middle East and Africa region. Falcon is also a key player in the United Arab Emirates government’s AAM strategy, and is preparing to introduce eVTOL air-

craft for tourist, air-taxi and cargo operations.

Falcon Aviation Services recently upgraded its helicopter fleet with an order for five new Airbus H130 helicopters, but Captain Oberoi said that these would be the last conventional helicopters that Falcon would buy. “Electric is the future,” he said.

“The UAE leadership want this to happen, and we are happy to partner with Autoflight.”

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UAE's Calidus B-250 woos on static display

The UAE's indigenous Calidus B-250 light attack aircraft programme is gathering pace. The first series production aircraft is on display in the static park, complete but as yet unpainted. This gives a graphic impression of the type's predominantly-composite construction, and shows off the aircraft's comprehensive suite of IR, laser and radar warning sensors, as well as the underfuselage L3 Wescam MX-15Di sensor turret. This aircraft is due to be delivered to the UAE Air Force and Air Defence in March next year.

Nearby sits the first prototype,

bedecked in a gaudy orange and grey colour scheme, while the grey-painted second aircraft has been a regular feature of the flying display.

The first prototype has been modified to serve as the prototype for the B-250T basic trainer variant, designed and developed using indigenous Emirati engineering resources.

The trainer version lacks some of the B-250's mission systems, and has new avionics, a large-area display and a new wingtip, giving an improved roll rate and handling characteristics tailored to its new role. It will also feature



Two of the Calidus test pilots Joao Vilela (left) and Nilson Pirini

a sophisticated ground-based training system.

Test pilot Nilson Pirini was keen to highlight the aircraft's avionics flexibility, which promises to allow the aircraft to be adapted to meet a wide range of requirements. The cockpit design philosophy had been very important, he said.

His colleague, Joao Vilela, praised the aircraft's excellent

manoeuvrability and fine flying qualities – which he said were well suited for formation flying.

The second prototype seems likely to become the prototype of the WX-80 weather research and cloud-seeding aircraft, which will feature a podded underwing weather radar and two underwing flare racks, each containing 40 cloud-seeding flares.

Fourth outing for 'Ba Yi' aerobatics team

The Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) 'August 1st' ('Ba Yi') aerobatic team has made a welcome return to the Dubai Air Show. This is only its fourth appearance outside China, having made its international debut at the Moscow Air Show in August 2015. The 'August 1st' aerobatics team was founded in 1962 and was named to commemorate the founding of the PLA during the 1927 Nanchang uprising.

Today, the team is based at Yangcun Air Force Base (Meichong) near Tianjin, home of the 24th Fighter Division, and part of the Beijing military region.

Originally equipped with the Shenyang JJ-5 fighter-trainer jets, a Chinese two-seat version of the Russian MiG-17, the team re-equipped with the Chengdu J-7EB and then the J-7GB in 2001. The Chengdu J-10 arrived in May 2009.

It's a welcome return for the Chinese aerobatics team that first appeared here at the show in 2017



▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

DXB sees 25% growth this year

Dubai International (DXB) is forecasting annual passenger traffic will surpass 2019 figures, reaching 86.8 million. Aircraft movements between January and September totalled 308,000 – up 25.2 per cent year-on-year.

"We're thrilled, but not entirely surprised that DXB is set to surpass the pre-pandemic milestone well ahead of our initial projections by almost a year," said Paul Griffiths, CEO of Dubai Airports.

Baggage handling at the airport has also seen improvements with a total of 57.5 million bags in 2023, with 91 per cent of all baggage delivered within 45 minutes to passengers. Although cargo gained momentum in the third quarter, 2023 reaching 446,400 tonnes, the hub registered a minor decline of under one per cent in cargo volumes over the first nine months of this year.

Top destinations so far in 2023 for the airport include India with 8.9 million passengers, followed by Saudi Arabia with 4.8 million passengers and the UK with 4.4 million passengers.



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▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

Emirates selects Thales Avant Up IFE on 777X

Thales' Avant Up IFE system has been selected by Emirates for its Boeing 777X aircraft. Avant Up's Optiq 4K QLED HDR screens deliver a superior cinematic viewing experience and feature Thales' Pulse power management giving passengers high-speed charging with in-screen USB-A and USB-C charging ports, as well as Bluetooth-pairing capabilities. The deal follows a previous agreement in 2022 with Emirates when it selected Avant Up for its A350 fleet.

Updates on guided munitions study

EDGE has announced the successful completion of feasibility studies for the integration of AI Tariq's LR-PGM family of long-range precision-guided munitions on the HAL Tejas LCA. Full integration and qualification of the LR-PGM on the Tejas is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2024. Theunis Botha, CEO of AI Tariq, said: "We look forward to presenting the range of AI Tariq's mission-proven, long-range precision-guided munitions to global HAL Tejas customers."

Global Airlines to bring back 'golden era' of flight

"I want to bring back the golden era of flying," was the message from Global Airlines CEO, James Asquith, who spoke to Show Business on Tuesday.

Asquith has bold plans to launch his airline using only Airbus A380s, of which he has acquired one from Doric Aviation and has deals in place for three more, for an undisclosed figure.

The airline will initially serve connections between London Gatwick and New York, as well as Los Angeles in the US.

"But the clue is in the name – ultimately we want to have a global network," said Asquith. "The end game is

a better product for everyone and a better place to work. We're getting thousands of crew and staff applications, we have a phenomenal, experienced team and passengers love the A380.

"There might be naysayers, but there is also plenty of support."

Having teamed up with wet lease and charter specialist HiFly, which has experience operating the A380 and the required

licences, Asquith remains tight lipped about a firm start date for commercial operations.

"You don't just buy or lease an aircraft and put it in the sky, we're putting a lot of time into focusing on getting our product and service offering right.

"I'm certainly not doing this to become rich. I've put everything I have into this – time, blood, sweat and money – and if I announce a start date and am even a week late, I'll be criticised.

"But I will say that we are hoping to have an aircraft in the sky very soon," Asquith said.



▲ GOLDEN GLOBAL

The end game is a better product for everyone and a better place to work James Asquith, CEO of Global Airlines

Honeywell and Egyptair sign component repair agreement

Honeywell has signed a five-year agreement with EgyptAir Maintenance and Engineering, to provide flat-rate component repair services for the entirety of the 80-plus Airbus A320, A330, plus Boeing B737 and B777 EgyptAir fleet.

Under the agreement, Honeywell will repair key existing components and aircraft systems, including envi-

ronmental controls, avionics and safety systems to keep EgyptAir's fleet well maintained.

Walid Elkhafif, chairman and CEO of EgyptAir Maintenance and Engineering, said: "Honeywell has a long track record of being a reliable and versatile partner to airlines, and we are pleased to partner with them for the component repairs across

our fleet. With the cost and lead time for new aircraft only extending, it is even more vital to have a long-term agreement to repair components quickly, efficiently and effectively to reduce time off-wing. This deal will cut down on administration, lower costs and reduce complexity." Ryan Lees, president, EMEA aftermarket, Honeywell



An EgyptAir Airbus A320-232

Aerospace, added: "EgyptAir has been a valued regional partner of Honeywell's over the past decades."

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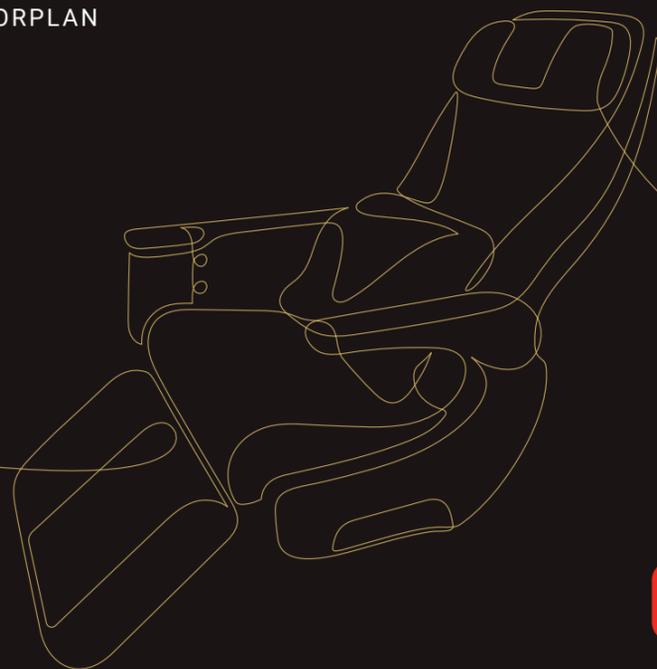
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from the top ▲

Mark Pilling reports

Saudi Technic is a key enabler for the growth and transformation of the Saudia Group, explained Captain Fahd H Cynndy, chief executive of Saudi Technic

Building a Saudi MRO powerhouse

Building a world-scale and world-class aircraft services industry in Saudi Arabia, capable of matching the Kingdom's huge airliner fleet build-up is a key target for Captain Fahd H Cynndy, CEO of Saudia Technic.

"Our mandate is to enable the Kingdom to have the services to fly," said Cynndy, who leads a business, formerly known as Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries, or SAEI, that has been rebranded as part of the group's new identity.

"In the Kingdom by 2031-32, we will require roughly 500-600 aircraft. Our infrastructure to support that right now and keep those aircraft flying is no-where near that. So, target number one is [MRO capacity] investment and we are building for that," continued Cynndy. This build-up will have a ripple effect into the national economy with an adjacent GDP impact in direct and indirect hiring and the supply chain associated with Saudi Technic, he noted.

Alongside this is the company's aim to become a centre of excellence in R&D, innovation, patent development, and participating with OEMs in advancing upcoming technologies, as opposed to just being authorised to maintain them.

Central to Saudi Technic's vision is the inauguration of its \$1.6bn MRO Village, a huge MRO complex with extensive airframe and engine overhaul capacity under construction at the company's base at the heart of King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah. The

initial elements of the MRO Village will begin operating in 2024 with the full opening planned by the end of 2025.

Today, Saudi Technic can undertake airframe servicing of different levels on 12-14 aircraft at a time, a number that will treble to 36-40 aircraft as the MRO Village grows, said Cynndy.

The Jet Propulsion Centre within the MRO Village will have a capacity of 350 engine and 500 APU overhauls annually when it enters full operation at the end of 2024, he added.

At present, the Saudi Technic workforce stands at close to 5,000 people, a number that will mushroom to nearly 12,000 in about 30 months. As the operation at the

MRO Village ramps up to full three-shift capacity the workforce will rise to 14,500, said Cynndy.

Group carriers Saudia and flyadeal will have the first refusal on Saudi Technic's capacity with third-party customers also a key element of the business plan. "We are also in discussions with Riyadh Air to assess how our services fit with their plans," said Cynndy.

The development of MRO service capability in partnership with the OEMs, with the company being airframe and OEM agnostic, is a key element of its strategy. "We want to integrate with the OEMs as opposed to being a third-party MRO," said Cynndy.

At the show, Saudi Technic signed up additional OEM service

agreements and has about a third of the deals in place it is targeting to build up its capabilities, he noted.

It is in "advanced discussions" with CFM and GE to add overhaul capability on the CFM56 and GE-90 engines and is talking with these OEMs about adding the Leap-1A and GENx too, said Cynndy. By early 2025 it will have signed up all its OEM roadmap.

As it invests in its capacity, Saudi Technic is looking at an initial public offering with a target date of 2028/29, said Cynndy. Further details of this plan will be unveiled shortly as the company prepares to take the next giant steps in its ambitious strategy to create not only an MRO leader in the Middle East, but a global MRO powerhouse. ▲



TEAMING UP

We want to integrate with the OEMs as opposed to being a third-party MRO, Captain Fahd H Cynndy



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Love is in the air

▼ HAL Tejas Indian Air Force fighter

▼ MB339s of the Italian Freccia Tricolore team in formation

▶ The French Air + Space Force Dassault Rafale

▼ The Boeing F-15QA Advanced Eagle – Qatar’s version of the long-lived fighter

▼ The KAI KUH-1E makes its first international airshow appearance

▲ Bellissimo aereo! Freccia Tricolore’s Leonardo MB339s leave their brushstrokes behind

▼ Bringing the X-factor: the Boeing 777X took on the smaller aircraft at their own game, showing off its own agility

As ever, the most entrancing views at the airshow were all to be found in the sky. Here are just some of the aircraft that caught our eye in the flying display...

▶ Dhruv is in the air! The stunning peacock livery of the Indian Air Force Sarang display team in their Dhruv ALHs was a joy to behold

▶ The Calidus B-250 (second prototype) is the UAE’s first indigenous aircraft design

▶ More MB339s of the UAE AF & AD’s Al Fursan team

▼
PAINTING THE SKIES

Flying works of art – UAE display team, Al Fursan used the sky as a canvas – beguiling visitors and exhibitors alike

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The show has seen major developments in the progress of UAE defence group Edge, with new partnerships and major orders announced for the young organisation

At the cutting edge of defence

The air show has seen major developments in the progress of UAE defence group Edge, with new partnerships and major orders announced for the young organisation.

“Over the last two years we’ve been achieving \$5bn of order intake, in terms of opportunities that have been secured,” said the managing director and CEO of Edge Group, Mansour AlMulla. “We’re very proud of this because this creates an incentive to further innovate.”

“Our portfolio started with 25 products in 2019 when we consolidated a lot of the defence industry in the UAE. In 2022, that had risen to around 120 products. Today, we’re at 159, with around a 50-50 split between products that are in development, or ready for production.”

“Our focus continues to be on autonomous solutions, be it air, land or sea – drones, uncrewed surface vessels or uncrewed ground vehicles. Then, there are smart weapons – guided missiles and what have you. We also focus on electronic warfare (EW). We started with zero EW products, today we have more than 10 that are ready to be deployed and around another 10 under development. We’ve come a long way. We’ve become a pretty sophisticated player in this industry.”

Edge’s achievements have been all the more impressive, said AlMulla, as from the start of its existence, it has been competing with global, well-established rivals.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) “plays a big role in our plans”. Edge is aiming for its Hunter family of drones, for example, to have a swarming capability, with multiple drones ‘talking’ and coordinating with each other in attack or defence.

The aim is to have coordination “between air, land and sea. That’s ultimately where we want to get to.”

Edge has a particular interest

in Brazil, where it saw from an early stage the possibility of strong partnerships with what AlMulla described as the like-minded mentality of local companies there.

It has taken a 50 per cent shareholding in Brazilian smart weapons and high-tech systems specialist SIATT to cooperate in the development and production of the national surface anti-ship missile (known by its Brazilian acronym MANSUP).

Final trial

Developed in co-operation with the Brazilian navy, the initial 70km-range MANSUP will undergo its final trial before the end of the year before production starts.

However, during the airshow, the partners signed a letter of intent with the Brazilian navy for the sale of the both the original and the extended-range version (200km) of MANSUP, which has been developed to meet the needs of both the Brazilian and UAE navies. The deal, if it proceeds to completion, will be worth \$165 million.

Additionally, Edge says it is currently in advanced discussions with several potential export customers for MANSUP-ER.

The deal is the first to emerge from the cooperation agreement signed by Edge and the Brazilian Navy at the LAAD defence exhibition in Rio de Janeiro in April this year for the co-development of advanced long-range anti-ship missile technology.

“Edge is continuously pushing the boundaries to become a major market player in high-tech defence systems,” said AlMulla.

“Our expanding partnerships in Brazil, particularly with the Brazilian Navy, are enabling us to leverage our experience and expertise to develop advanced defence capabilities and other related technologies across multiple domains. We are confident that the MANSUP-ER system will disrupt the domination held for years by existing incumbent solutions.”

In the air, the group has a range of aerial platforms handling tasks

such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). It has rapidly moved from concepts to building real platforms that have demonstrated the carriage and dropping of weapons.

Significant acquisitions

That range will be enhanced by Edge’s acquisition of significant shareholdings in the past two weeks in two companies whose products dovetail with Edge’s expertise.

The group has taken a 50 per cent stake in Poland’s Flaris, with the aim of converting the European company’s high-speed personal jet to an unmanned system, while also taking a majority 52 per cent stake in Switzerland’s Anavia, which manufactures VTOL systems.

“Incorporating Flaris’ engineering capabilities and a broad range of jets into our ecosystem is a strategic move for Edge that will mark our expansion into jet engine manufacturing and advanced aviation technologies, and add significant value to our high-tech portfolio,” AlMulla said. ▲



COORDINATION IS KEY

Our focus continues to be on autonomous solutions, be it air, land or sea, said AlMulla



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