DUBAI AIRSHOW: NEWS IN BRIEF

News / Events / Festivals



Here is a roundup of news coming out of day two of the Dubai Airshow:

Airbus studying A350 variant

Airbus is studying whether there is demand for a larger member of its A350 jet family and expects to make up its mind within a couple of months, its sales chief said on Monday.

The European planemaker is not yet offering a specific design to airlines, but anything that it does decide to build would leapfrog Boeing's 777X, sales chief John Leahy said, referring to a new 406-seat version of the US company's 777 wide-body series.

Airbus's largest twin-engined jet is the 369-seat A350-100, which competes partly with the 365-seat Boeing 777-300ER.

In a sign that any new plane would need to be carefully marketed so as to avoid upstaging the existing A350-1000, Mr Leahy denied that the potential new plane would be called the A350-1100.

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“There is nothing called the A350-1100 and I wouldn’t call anything the 1100,” he said. – Reuters

Jet Airways confirms order for 75 Boeing 737 Max aircraft

Jet Airways on Monday announced the confirmation of its largest-ever fleet order for 75 Boeing 737 Max aircraft at the Dubai Airshow.

The order includes options and purchase rights for an additional 50 aircraft.

The new aircraft will support Jet Airways’ replacement strategy and ensure it maintains a modern, environmentally friendly fleet. Jet Airways currently has a fleet of 115 aircraft.

The transaction will be completely financed and managed through a sale and leaseback arrangement when Jet Airways takes delivery of the aircraft from 2018.

Commenting on the announcement, Naresh Goyal, the chairman of Jet Airways, said: “This order is an endorsement of our confidence in the long-term prospects of the Indian aviation sector, which reflects the positive forecast for the country,s economy, and offers tremendous potential for growth and development.”

“Jet Airways has led the path in Indian aviation, providing enhanced connectivity between domestic and international sectors. We are aligned with the Government of India,s mission to provide affordable air connectivity to the people across the country.” – The National staff

Dubai airports get more jet fuel with new Enoc pipeline

Enoc on Monday announced the completion of a new jet fuel pipeline from its storage terminals to Dubai International Airport to cope with an expected increase in demand.

The US$250 million project will be able to pump 850 cubic metres of jet fuel per hour to the airport, which is 55 per cent of its total demand, the company said in a statement.

Enoc also plans to extend the pipeline to Dubai’s second hub, Al Maktoum International Airport, chief executive Saif Al Falasi said.

Dubai International Airport carried more than 70m international passengers last year, more than any other airport, and has continued to grow this year.

With the primary airport nearing capacity, Dubai is encouraging airlines to expand into Al Maktoum International, a sprawling facility outside the city that currently serves just five airlines, despite a projected capacity above 200m passengers a year.

Zaid Al Qufaidi, managing director of Enoc Marketing, said the new pipeline project was expected to meet growing demand from both airports until the mid-2030s. – Reuters

UAE announces $1.27 billion contract for surveillance systems

The UAE on Monday announced a US$1.27 billion deal for upgraded Saab surveillance systems aboard new Bombardier aircraft that the Gulf Arab country has acquired.

Saab said the deal is for a new version of its Erieye radar system for the Bombardier Global 6000 aircraft.

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The value of the deal is the largest announced so far at the biennial Dubai Airshow, which runs until Thursday.

Also Monday, Lockheed Martin announced it has been awarded a $262.8 million contract from the US air force to service Saudi Arabia's F-15 sniper targeting system, search and track sensors and radars that allow for day and night low-level navigation.

Embraer Defense & Security announced Lebanon would be acquiring six A-29 Super Tucano turboprop aircraft, a sale that was approved by the US state department in June. The deal includes logistics support for the aircraft, which are used in light air support missions, and training for Lebanese pilots and mechanics. The company did not disclose the value of the deal. – AP

Boeing partners with Tata to build Apache fuselages in India

Boeing said on Monday it will enter a joint venture partnership with India's Tata Advanced Systems to build fuselages for the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter in India.

The venture will compete for contracts to manufacture additional Boeing platforms, both commercial and defence, the US aerospace giant said in a statement at the Dubai Airshow.

"Over the last 12 months, we have doubled our sourcing from India and are committed to continue that journey," said Pratyush Kumar, president of Boeing India.

Boeing gave no financial details about the arrangement.

TASL is a wholly owned aerospace and defence subsidiary of Tata Sons, the holding company of one of India's largest conglomerates. – Reuters

Bell sees delayed recovery in commercial helicopter market

Bell Helicopter, a unit of Textron, does not expect a recovery in the commercial helicopter market until the first or second quarter of 2017.

Bell and other helicopter makers had previously said they expected an improvement some time in 2016. But Patrick Moulay, vice president of global sales and marketing for the helicopter market, said the outlook was worse than expected six months ago, given that key customers now believed that oil and gas prices would remain lower for a longer period.

"We're actually in a tougher spot now than we were six months ago," Mr Moulay said in an interview at the Dubai Airshow. "The entire industry has given up on a recovery in 2016. We don't see (it) now before the first quarter or the second quarter (of 2017)." – Reuters

Bombardier says almost done with CS100 flight test

Canadian planemaker Bombardier said that it has nearly completed flight testing of its new CS100 regional jet, which makes its debut at the Dubai Airshow this week ahead of its planned entry into service next year.

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Fred Cromer, president of Bombardier Commercial Aircraft, told reporters the company's CSeries programme was doing well, and was seeing demand from customers in the Gulf region. Certification of the new CS100, whose FTK-5 test model flew to Dubai last week, is due by the end of the year.

Completion of the flight test programme and the plane's certification are essential for Bombardier to drum up additional orders for the new jet. The company has said it expects to have sold 300 jets before the plane enters into service in the first half of 2016. – Reuters

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