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Weekly Aviation Headline News

> We have to face the fact that there is no absolute safety and security in this industry.
>
> *Carsten Spohr, Lufthansa Chief Executive*



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Airline chiefs admit it is not possible to fully safeguard against rogue pilots

flydubai attack last week brings back painful memories of Germanwings Flight 9525 which was deliberately crashed by its first officer in March 2015

Airline executives said safety standards remained high after an incident involving a flydubai co-pilot last week but acknowledged it was hard to guard against a rogue pilot. On Wednesday October 3, the co-pilot of flydubai flight FZ1073, which had left Dubai and was bound for Israel, attempted to carry out a "terrorist attack" according to the United Arab Emirates prosecutor general. The co-pilot attacked the pilot inside the cockpit with a crash axe and attempted to take control of the aircraft, during which the plane is understood to have plunged 16,000 feet in just 30 seconds. After the injured captain managed to open the cockpit door, a passenger helped stabilise the plane before a standby crew member who was on board landed it safely and disaster was averted after passengers and crew subdued the co-pilot after what Israeli officials said was an apparent attempt to crash the plane that was carrying more than 170 passengers and crew. According to Reuters news agency, the co-pilot was identified as Hammam al-Hammami, an Omani national. "If you have somebody who is a mad person in a cockpit, it's very difficult to legislate for it," Ryanair Group Chief Executive Michael O'Leary told reporters on the sidelines of an Airlines for Europe (A4E) press conference in Brussels. It has been reported that the flydubai co-pilot told interrogators in the UAE, where he is in custody, that he had planned the attack before joining the Dubai state-owned airline. Saudi Arabia has opened an air accident investigation into the incident, Reuters has also reported, while experts assess the implications for aviation safety alongside the separate UAE-led criminal probe, three people close to the matter said. Lufthansa Chief Executive Carsten Spohr said it was impossible to prevent every incident and that aviation safety standards remain high. "We have to face the fact that there is no absolute safety and security in this industry," Spohr told reporters, adding that mental health screening of pilots was already robust. He added that the last comparable case involving a pilot occurred more than a decade ago. Then, a Germanwings Airbus A320, Flight 9525 from Barcelona–El Prat Airport in Spain en route to Düsseldorf Airport in Germany, crashed in the French Alps in March 2015 after the first officer deliberately flew the aircraft into a mountainside, killing all 150 passengers and crew on board. It was later discovered that the first officer, Andreas Lubitz, had been treated previously for suicidal tendencies and his doctor had declared him unfit to work. He kept this information from Germanwings and reported for duty as normal. It is understood that shortly after reaching cruising altitude and while the pilot was out of the cockpit, Lubitz locked the cabin door and began a deliberate descent at 3,400ft/min, ten minutes after which the plane crashed on the southern side of the Tête du Travers within the Massif des Trois-Évêchés mountain range.

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AIRCRAFT & ENGINE NEWS

AerCap reports strong third-quarter transactions



© AerCap

AerCap Holdings N.V. signed 85 lease agreements in the third quarter of 2026, including 16 wide-body aircraft, 45 narrow-body aircraft, 13 engines and 11 helicopters, as the aircraft lessor continued to manage and reposition its portfolio. The company completed 34 purchases during the quarter, comprising 32 aircraft and two helicopters. Aircraft acquired for its owned portfolio included eight Airbus A320neo-family aircraft, 20 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, two Boeing 787-9s and two Embraer E195-E2s. AerCap also completed 85 sale transactions covering 65 aircraft, 13 engines and seven helicopters. The aircraft sales included 15 Airbus A320-family aircraft, four Airbus A320neo-family aircraft, one Airbus A321 freighter, three Airbus A330s, three Airbus A350s, seven Boeing 737NGs, two Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, nine Boeing 767 freighters, two Boeing 777-200ERs, four Embraer E190s and two Embraer E195-E2s from its owned portfolio, as well as 13 aircraft from its managed portfolio. The engine sales comprised 11 engines from its owned portfolio and two from its managed portfolio. AerCap signed financing transactions worth about US$900 million during the quarter. It also repurchased 5.3 million shares at an average price of US$147.12 a share, for a total of about US$783 million. The company declared a quarterly cash dividend of US$0.40 per ordinary share.

Embraer aircraft deliveries rise 6% in third quarter

Embraer delivered 66 aircraft in the third quarter of this year, its strongest third-quarter performance on record. Deliveries rose 2% from the previous quarter and 6% from a year earlier. The Brazilian planemaker delivered 175 aircraft in the first nine months of 2026, up 14% from 153 a year earlier, as production-levelling initiatives continued to support output. Commercial Aviation delivered 22 aircraft in the quarter, comprising 11 E175s and 11 E2-family jets. Deliveries increased 10% both quarter-on-quarter and year-on-year, from 20 aircraft in each comparison period. Executive Aviation delivered 41 business jets, unchanged from a year earlier. The result reflects progress in a production-levelling programme implemented over the past two years, which has gradually reduced the concentration of deliveries in the second half of the year. In Defense & Security, Embraer delivered one KC-390 Millennium multi-mission military transport aircraft and two A-29 Super Tucanos, for a total of three aircraft, compared with one in the same quarter a year earlier. Embraer maintained its 2026 delivery outlook, targeting 80 to 85 aircraft in Commercial Aviation, with the midpoint representing a 6% increase from 2025, and 160 to 170 executive jets, also implying 6% growth at the midpoint.

BOC Aviation completes 54 transactions in third quarter

BOC Aviation Limited said it has completed 54 transactions in the third quarter of 2026, including commitments to purchase 13 aircraft, deliveries of seven aircraft, sales of eight owned aircraft and 17 lease commitments. The aircraft lessor said its total portfolio comprised 812 aircraft and engines owned, managed and on order as of September 30, 2026. Its orderbook included 322 aircraft and one engine. The company's 466 owned aircraft had an average age of 5.1 years and an average remaining lease term of 7.6 years. BOC Aviation's owned and managed portfolios served 89 airlines across 45 countries and regions. Cash collection from airline customers remained at 99.2% for the first nine months of 2026. The company said the delivery figure excluded four aircraft acquired by an airline customer on or before delivery.



AIRCRAFT & ENGINE NEWS

KLM takes delivery of first A350-900

KLM has taken delivery of its first Airbus A350-900, bringing the latest-generation wide-body aircraft into service as the Dutch carrier continues to renew its long-haul fleet. The Air France-KLM Group airline currently operates ten Airbus A330-family aircraft and 17 A321neos. The A350 will fly long-haul routes from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, including services to destinations such as Toronto, expanding and strengthening KLM's global network. The aircraft has 331 seats in a three-class configuration, including 34 business-class suites with direct aisle access, 26 premium-comfort seats and 271 economy seats. It features Airbus' Airspace cabin, with larger luggage compartments, enhanced ambient lighting and high-speed satellite connectivity, alongside design features aimed at improving comfort and ergonomics for passengers and crew. The A350 can fly up to 9,700 nautical miles, or 18,000 kilometres, non-stop. Its aerodynamic design, lightweight materials and latest-generation Rolls-Royce engines are designed to deliver a 25% reduction in fuel burn, operating costs and CO_2 emissions compared with previous-generation competitor aircraft, according to Airbus.



KLM's first A350-900 takes off *© Airbus*

Royal Air Maroc receives sixth Boeing 737-8



ACG has delivered the last out of six B737-8 aircraft to Royal Air Maroc *© ACG*

Aviation Capital Group (ACG) has delivered a Boeing 737-8 aircraft to Morocco's Royal Air Maroc, completing the delivery of six aircraft to the airline from ACG's orderbook this year. The latest aircraft brings the number of 737-8s delivered by ACG to Royal Air Maroc to six in six months, supporting the carrier's fleet renewal and expansion plans. "With this latest delivery, ACG marks the addition of the sixth 737-8 to Royal Air Maroc's fleet in six months," said Carter A. White, ACG's executive vice president and chief commercial officer. ACG is a global aircraft asset manager providing aircraft leasing and related services to airlines worldwide.

AERA arranges US$300 million aircraft portfolio acquisitions

Aera Aviation Capital (AERA) has arranged the acquisition of two portfolios comprising eight commercial passenger aircraft with a combined value of more than US$300 million, marking its first transaction since the company's launch. The portfolios are made up predominantly of new-technology Airbus A320neo-family and Boeing 737 Max aircraft leased to a diversified global customer base of full-service and low-cost airlines. The transactions mark AERA's first collaboration with Macquarie Asset Management (MAM). The portfolio acquisitions were funded by capital from a Macquarie-managed fund, alongside debt financing from MUFG Bank Ltd. AERA will manage the aircraft portfolios. The deals were originated and arranged by AERA, which said they represent its entry into the aircraft-leasing market. "We are pleased to announce AERA's first aviation transaction," Chief Executive Officer Kieran Corr said. "We are excited to work with MAM — an investor with a global outlook and a long-term commitment to the aviation sector. It is a vote of confidence in the AERA team and its established reputation for expertise in the leasing sector."



AERA has arranged its first aircraft portfolio deals with Macquarie, MUFG *© Aera Aviation Capital*

AIRCRAFT & ENGINE NEWS

Biman Bangladesh Airlines places order for ten Airbus aircraft



Biman Bangladesh Airlines aircraft *© Airbus*

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has placed a firm order for ten Airbus aircraft, comprising four A350-900s and six A321neos, to modernise its fleet and expand its international network. Operating from its Dhaka hub, the airline will use the aircraft's range and efficiency to support planned services to North America and strengthen connections to key destinations in Europe and the Middle East. Bangladesh's growing working-age population is strengthening its medium-term economic prospects and driving demand for air travel. Its large overseas diaspora, particularly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, sustains strong demand for international services, while expanding foreign trade is increasing air cargo requirements. Airbus' latest-generation aircraft are well placed to meet these needs.



AIRCRAFT & ENGINE NEWS

AerSale leases Boeing 757 freighter to Mister Air



Mister Air B757 freighter © AerSale

AerSale Corporation (AerSale) has leased a Boeing 757-200PCF freighter to Romanian cargo carrier Mister Air. The airline will operate the aircraft on behalf of AerCommerce, one of its major shareholders. The freighter is expected to enter commercial service this October. The Boeing 757-200PCF will launch Mister Air's own flight operations under its Romanian Air Operator Certificate, using its own crews. Based at Łódź Airport in Poland, the aircraft will serve AerCommerce's cargo customers, connecting production and e-commerce hubs with destinations across Central and Eastern Europe, alongside parcel services and worldwide special missions. Its range and payload suit routes where larger wide-body aircraft are uneconomic. Mister Air plans further fleet growth to meet existing and expected demand.

Deliveries of LATAM Brazil's E195-E2 aircraft begin



The delivery process for LATAM's first of 12 aircraft scheduled for 2026 has begun © Embraer

LATAM Airlines Brazil (LATAM) has begun taking delivery of its first Embraer E195-E2 aircraft, with the new jet expected to enter service in the coming days as the airline expands its domestic network. The aircraft is the first of 12 E195-E2s scheduled for delivery to LATAM by the end of 2026. Its arrival marks progress on a plan announced in September 2025, when LATAM Airlines Group disclosed an agreement to acquire up to 74 aircraft of the model. LATAM's first E195-E2s are scheduled to enter service between November 2026 and March 2027. In the initial phase, the first 14 aircraft will be deployed across 42 routes, including eight new routes and four destinations not previously served by the airline: Cabo Frio and Macaé in Rio de Janeiro state, Ji-Paraná in Rondônia and Rondonópolis in Mato Grosso. The airline expects the new aircraft to support its expansion in Brazil, where the number of airports it serves has risen to 63 from 44 six years ago. LATAM Airlines Brazil Chief Executive Jerome Cadier said the E195-E2 would enable the carrier to serve new markets with strong demand and economic potential, connecting them to its wider global network. "We chose the E195-E2 with a clear objective: to continue expanding LATAM's presence in Brazil sustainably," Cadier said. He added that the aircraft would help the airline exceed 70 airports served in Brazil by 2027.

MRO & PRODUCTION NEWS

First Class Air broadens MRO services with Vertical Aerospace investment



Vertical Aerospace supports many sectors of the MRO industry, including commercial aircraft, air cargo, military and rotorcraft *© Vertical Aerospace*

First Class Air has invested in and partnered with Vertical Aerospace, an aviation MRO provider based in Bristow, Oklahoma, expanding its capabilities in complex aircraft structural repair, engineering and fabricated-part manufacturing. The deal will increase First Class Air's technical capabilities and capacity, giving customers access to additional resources for the repair and support of complex aircraft structures and components. Vertical Aerospace will continue to operate from its 226,000-ft² facility in Bristow under founder and General Manager Tray Siegfried. Vertical Aerospace provides MRO, engineering and fabricated-part manufacturing services for commercial, cargo and military aircraft. Its capabilities include nacelle and thrust-reverser repair, flight-control surfaces, composite and metallic structural repair, cowlings, ducts and exhaust components, as well as repair development, fabrication, non-destructive testing and specialised processing. The company's quality system is AS9100 Rev. D certified, while its facility holds FAA and EASA repair station certifications. The transaction also adds in-house repair and manufacturing capabilities to First Class Air. Vertical Aerospace's Bristow facility includes an autoclave and clean room, phosphoric-acid anodising and cleaning systems, non-destructive testing, heat treatment, welding, laser tracking, engineering and design systems, and other specialised equipment for advanced repair and manufacturing applications.

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Barnes Aerospace buys Scotland-based ATL Turbine Services

Barnes Aerospace has acquired Scotland-based ATL Turbine Services, expanding its aerospace component repair operations into Europe and establishing its first dedicated component repair and overhaul presence in the region. ATL Turbine Services, based in Dundee, specialises in the refurbishment and repair of hot-section gas turbine components. The acquisition adds repair, assessment, coating and engineering capabilities in Europe to Barnes Aerospace's existing global repair network, allowing it to support customers across the turbine engine component lifecycle. The deal follows Barnes Aerospace's acquisition of US-based Jet AirWerks in August 2026, which expanded its commercial aero-engine inspection, repair, overhaul and disassembly capabilities in North America. Barnes Aerospace said the two acquisitions support its strategy of developing a broader global aftermarket network and providing full-lifecycle component services closer to customers.



ATL Turbine Services has been repairing and refurbishing gas turbine components for over 30 years *© ATL Turbine Services*

MRO & PRODUCTION NEWS

GMF to establish Muscat Airport MRO facility



© GMF AeroAsia

Garuda Maintenance Facility Aero Asia (GMF AeroAsia), part of the Garuda Indonesia Group, has signed a concession agreement with Oman's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to operate a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility at Muscat International Airport for 20 years. GMF AeroAsia Chief Executive Officer Andi Fahrurrozi and Oman CAA President Eng. Naif Ali Hamed Al-Abri signed the agreement at the Civil Aviation Investment Forum 2026 in Muscat on October 5, supporting GMF's international expansion. The CAA will own the hangar, provide the concession and oversee regulatory compliance. GMF will develop and operate the hangar and supporting facilities in phases, guided by market demand and the agreed business plan. Oman's strategic location is expected to broaden GMF AeroAsia's access to markets in the Middle East, Africa and Europe, complementing the company's existing service network based in Indonesia. Andi Fahrurrozi commented on the new agreement: "The development of an MRO facility in Oman marks the first step in establishing GMF's operational presence closer to customers in the Middle East and surrounding regions. With our experience and capabilities, we see an opportunity to serve a broader aircraft maintenance market while contributing to the growth of Oman's aviation industry." On the same occasion, GMF AeroAsia also signed a Commemoration Document with Mach Aerospace International to support the development of aviation capabilities and human resources. The collaboration is part of GMF's efforts to strengthen the supporting ecosystem for MRO operations in Oman. As the next step, GMF will continue its operational preparations with local partners through the phased development of facilities, capabilities, and human resources. By strengthening its presence in international markets and building strategic partnerships, GMF remains committed to delivering services that go beyond technical reliability to create greater value for its customers.

ST Engineering opens Singapore aircraft maintenance hub



ST Engineering's Changi Creek, Singapore, facility © ST Engineering

ST Engineering has opened an 84,000 m² aircraft maintenance facility at Changi Airport in Singapore, expanding its capacity to service wide-body aircraft. The facility is the group's fourth airframe maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) site in Singapore. It features four wide-body aircraft bays that, when fully operational, are expected to increase ST Engineering's wide-body maintenance capacity in the city-state by 40%, potentially enabling about 100 additional aircraft to be serviced annually. The new facility incorporates digital technologies, automation and artificial intelligence to improve maintenance efficiency, aircraft turnaround times and operational reliability. Digital planning systems, automated storage and retrieval solutions, robotics and electronic documentation rooms are designed to provide greater visibility across the maintenance process. Drones will be used to conduct general visual inspections, while autonomous mobile robots will transport aircraft parts from storage areas directly to maintenance bays, reducing manual handling and streamlining workflows. Real-time maintenance dashboards will provide operational data to support faster decision-making. The company also plans to use AI-enabled inspection and defect identification technologies to improve maintenance quality and strengthen aircraft safety and reliability. ST Engineering expects the facility to employ more than 500 people when operations are fully ramped up, adding to Singapore's aerospace workforce and supporting the development of technical capabilities in aircraft maintenance. The opening comes as airlines seek to maximise aircraft utilisation amid longer service lives and rising demand for maintenance services. By expanding its Singapore operations, ST Engineering is positioning its commercial aerospace business to accommodate additional work while strengthening its presence in a major international aviation hub.

SR Technics cuts processing time with Bridgestone technology



© SR Technics

SR Technics has completed the rollout of Bridgestone Corporation's (Bridgestone) easytrack solution, becoming the first MRO provider to adopt the technology, the company announced. The implementation follows a two-year joint project and extends a partnership between SR Technics Spain SAU and Bridgestone that dates back to 1999. The technology has replaced a largely manual process with a digital workflow covering logistics, planning and inventory management. It was first introduced at SR Technics Spain's Mallorca base before being expanded to Madrid and is now integrated across stores and wheel shop operations at both sites. SR Technics said the system has cut processing times by 45%, while improving planning, efficiency and data accuracy and reducing manual administrative work. The company said the technology also provides greater traceability across operations, allowing staff to track workflows and inventory through a single system.

MRO & PRODUCTION NEWS

Deutsche Aircraft opens Leipzig plant for D328eco production



Official opening of Deutsche Aircraft's new FAL in Leipzig *© Deutsche Aircraft*

Deutsche Aircraft has officially opened a final assembly line at Leipzig/Halle Airport, marking the transition of its D328eco regional aircraft programme from development to serial production. The company said the facility, representing an investment of more than €100 million (US$114 million), will make Leipzig the production hub for the next-generation aircraft and restore aircraft manufacturing to Saxony for the first time in more than 60 years. The 60,500 m² site includes the final assembly line, a flight readiness hangar, logistics centre and administration building. It has been designed to produce up to 48 aircraft a year. The opening strengthens Deutsche Aircraft's integrated operations in Germany, linking engineering, certification, flight testing, industrialisation, final assembly and customer delivery across its sites in Oberpfaffenhofen and Leipzig. The company said the facility would help retain key aircraft manufacturing expertise in Germany and strengthen the country's aerospace industrial base. The D328eco programme is built around the company's "Made in Germany. Built in Saxony. Delivered to the World" strategy, combining German aircraft engineering with Saxony's industrial base and Leipzig's international transport links.

FTAI Aviation and United extend CFM56-7B engine exchange programme



FTAI and United extend CFM56-7B exchange programme *© CFM International*

FTAI Aviation (FTAI) has announced a multi-year maintenance, repair and exchange (MRE) agreement with United Airlines (United), one of the largest CFM56-7B operators. Under the agreement, FTAI will provide engine exchanges in place of traditional shop visits. The partnership, which began with United's V2500-powered fleet, now covers selected CFM56-7B engines, with scope for the programme to expand over the agreement's term. Under the MRE programme, FTAI supplies a serviceable engine ahead of each scheduled United engine removal, then purchases the unserviceable engine, saving the airline the cost and downtime of a traditional shop visit. FTAI adds the acquired engines to its inventory for use across its MRO network. Launched with an initial group of engines in 2026, the programme will expand as further engines become due for removal, with both companies coordinating deliveries around United's removal schedule. "This is an important step forward in our maintenance programme for our Boeing 737 NG aircraft," said United Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Mike Leskinen. "This growing relationship will help us improve utilisation for this important part of our fleet as we fly more customers to more destinations." This announcement follows last week's acquisition by FTAI Aviation of 27 Boeing 737-700 aircraft from Canadian airline WestJet, marking one of the company's largest aircraft transactions to date.

MILITARY AND DEFENCE

Boeing wins first full-rate MH-139A Grey Wolf order



An MH-139A Grey Wolf flies over fields *© Boeing*

Boeing has won an order for the first four full-rate production MH-139A Grey Wolf helicopters after the U.S. Air Force declared initial operating capability for the programme earlier this year, clearing the way for expanded deployment. The award brings the total number of MH-139As under contract to 42, with Boeing having delivered 27 aircraft to date. The milestone marks the start of full-rate production for the helicopter, which is designed to support the Air Force's mission to protect the nation's strategic missile fields and other critical assets. "This milestone validates key readiness levels for Grey Wolf and supports the service's fielding plans to secure vital national assets across the country's strategic missile fields," said Kathleen Jolivette, Vice President and General Manager, Vertical Lift Programs, for Boeing Defense, Space & Security. The latest award is expected to add momentum to the Air Force's planned fielding and modernisation efforts as Boeing scales production of the MH-139A for operational use.

MILITARY AND DEFENCE

Finland welcomes first permanently based F-35A

Finland has received its first two permanently based F-35A fighter aircraft, marking the start of a new era of fifth-generation air capability for the Finnish Defence Forces. Lockheed Martin joined an arrival ceremony hosted by the Finnish Air Force, attended by senior Finnish government and military officials, US and allied representatives and industry partners. The event marked the milestone as Finland takes on a growing role in security and deterrence across the Nordic region, Europe and NATO. "What begins here is the introduction of a fifth-generation system built for the security environment we actually live in," said Major General Timo Herranen, Commander of the Finnish Air Force. "The F-35 was chosen because it is designed for an environment like ours. Flying the F-35, our pilots can do the mission and come home to fly the next round. A fifth-generation aircraft that can see farther but not be seen, share information faster, strike accurately and survive longer is not a luxury here. It is a requirement." Finland has received ten of its planned 64 F-35As. Eight of the aircraft are temporarily based at Ebbing Air National Guard Base in Arkansas, where Finnish pilots and maintenance personnel are undergoing training ahead of the fleet's continued introduction into Finnish service.



F-35A fighter jet *© Lockheed Martin*

StandardAero gains new US Air Force maintenance contract



F-15 Fighter *© Boeing*

StandardAero has disclosed it has secured a US Air Force (USAF) contract to apply its Maintenance Insight™ predictive maintenance, readiness and reliability diagnostic tools to the F100-220 engine programme. The engine powers more than 175 F-15 aircraft. The award extends Maintenance Insight's coverage to a fifth engine type in the USAF fleet. Maintenance Insight comprises advanced reliability models and predictive maintenance tools developed over the past two decades to support major defence platforms. Hosted within the USAF's cloud computing environment, the tools use artificial intelligence, machine learning and digital twin technologies to analyse engine failure modes and inform maintenance work scopes, deployment planning and preventive maintenance. Propulsion teams use these real-time insights to improve readiness and reliability while optimising engine maintenance costs. "The Air Force has been on the leading edge of Predictive Maintenance philosophy and implementation, and StandardAero is proud to have been part of that journey," commented Marc Drobny, President of the StandardAero Military, Helicopters and Energy Division. "Our solution can deliver long-term reduction of maintenance costs, and improvements in deployment readiness and time on wing for the fleet. We stand ready to expand this solution to other engine platforms powering USAF aircraft, as well as commercial aerospace fleets." Together with the USAF's Propulsion team, StandardAero has successfully developed diagnostic and predictive maintenance applications for multiple engine fleets, including the T56 engine powering the C-130 fleet, the J85 engine powering the T-38 fleet, the TF33 engine powering the B-52 fleet, and the TF39 engine."

Paraguay becomes SkyCourier's first South American military user

Paraguay's Air Force has become the first military operator in South America of Textron Aviation's Cessna SkyCourier turboprop, adding the aircraft to its existing fleet of Cessna Grand Caravans. The aircraft was funded by Itaipu Binacional, the entity jointly operated by the governments of Brazil and Paraguay and will support relief operations and other missions across the country. The twin-engine, high-wing turboprop is designed for multi-mission operations in remote and challenging environments, with a focus on reliability, payload capacity and simplified maintenance. The SkyCourier's ability to operate with a single pilot and carry substantial loads will allow Paraguay's air force to expand its role in medical evacuations, patient transport and rapid humanitarian assistance during natural disasters and other emergencies. The delivery marks another step in the SkyCourier's expansion into specialised and multi-mission operations, adding a military customer in South America to its growing operator base.



The Paraguayan Air Force will add one Cessna SkyCourier to its fleet *© Textron Aviation*

MILITARY AND DEFENCE

Romania orders 12 Airbus H225M helicopters

Romania has signed a contract to acquire 12 Airbus H225M helicopters, as Bucharest moves to modernise its military rotorcraft fleet under the European Union's Security Action for Europe (SAFE) initiative. The agreement was signed with France's Armament General Directorate (DGA) under SAFE, the EU financial instrument designed to support urgent defence investments by member states and strengthen the European defence industry. The 12 H225Ms will begin the replacement of Romania's IAR-330 Puma fleet, supporting conventional and special-operations missions. Romania's Air Force operates the Puma; a locally produced version of the aircraft built under licence from Aérospatiale. Bucharest has also previously ordered two H215Ms in a naval configuration. The contract marks the second agreement between Romania and Airbus Helicopters under the SAFE initiative. Romania recently ordered seven H160 and five H145 helicopters for public-service missions. Airbus has operated in Romania for more than two decades through its helicopter, defence and commercial-aircraft businesses. Airbus Helicopters' customer centre provides support and services to Romanian and international fleets, while Airbus Defence and Space delivers secure communications and systems-engineering services. Airbus Commercial Aircraft manufactures strategic components in the country.



H225M helicopter *© Airbus Helicopters*

Northrop Grumman completes first autonomous Talon Blue flight



YFQ-48A Talon Blue has demonstrated a successful fully autonomous flight
© Northrop Grumman

Northrop Grumman has completed the first fully autonomous flight of its YFQ-48A Talon Blue aircraft, including taxiing, take-off, in-flight manoeuvres and landing, as the US defence contractor seeks to accelerate the development of lower-cost autonomous systems. Developed using company investment, Talon Blue features a modular design and advanced manufacturing techniques intended to reduce costs and enable faster production without compromising mission capability, Northrop Grumman said. The flight builds on the company's seven decades of experience in autonomous systems and more than 500,000 autonomous flight hours. Data and lessons from the programme are expected to inform the development of future autonomous platforms. "Our customers made it clear they need autonomous systems that can be fielded faster and more affordably without sacrificing mission effectiveness. We listened," said Craig Woolston, vice-president and general manager of research and advanced design at Northrop Grumman. "Talon Blue's first flight is one step towards a new generation of autonomous capabilities. Every flight and lesson strengthens our broader autonomy work and sharpens what comes next," he added. Talon Blue is part of Northrop Grumman's Project Talon portfolio, which also includes Talon IQ, an autonomous testbed based on the Scaled Composites Model 437 aircraft. Talon IQ uses the company's Prism Mission Autonomy software and provides a reference architecture for government customers to develop and test autonomous capabilities. The system is designed to accelerate the maturation of autonomy technologies while reducing the time and cost required to introduce new mission capabilities. Northrop Grumman said the two programmes would enable the company and its partners to develop, test and deploy autonomous systems more rapidly, tailored to emerging threats and operational requirements. The initiative reflects the defence industry's broader push to develop autonomous aircraft that can be produced and deployed more quickly and affordably, while retaining the capabilities required for military missions. Northrop Grumman is a global aerospace and defence technology company whose business spans military aircraft, autonomous systems, weapons, space systems and other defence technologies.

GKN Aerospace, Saab expand Gripen engine partnership

GKN Aerospace and Saab have signed a long-term collaboration agreement covering the propulsion system for the Gripen E/F fighter aircraft, expanding GKN Aerospace's role in the programme. Under the agreement, GKN Aerospace will become Saab's preferred provider of engine services for the Gripen E/F. The partnership will cover propulsion support, capability development and contributions to Saab's international Gripen campaigns. The agreement sets out how the companies will work together on engine and propulsion-related activities within the Gripen E/F programme. It aims to strengthen the aircraft's offering to Sweden and international customers. GKN Aerospace already provides engine maintenance and technical support for the Gripen fleet in Sweden. The new agreement extends cooperation to long-term capability development and expanded customer support for current and future Gripen operators. The companies will also continue discussions on strengthening Sweden's long-term capabilities relating to the Gripen E/F engine. GKN Aerospace holds the type certificate for the RM12 engine, which powers the Gripen C/D fleet.



Gripen E/F fighter aircraft *© Saab*

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Airhub Aviation adopts MRO-PRO software



Airhub Aviation has selected MRO-PRO software for line maintenance *© MRO-PRO*

Airhub Aviation, a subsidiary of Lithuania-based GetJet Group, has signed up to use AI-driven aircraft maintenance software from MRO-PRO as the company expands its presence in the aviation maintenance market. MRO-PRO said Airhub Aviation will use its centralised digital platform to manage and coordinate line maintenance operations, providing greater visibility and automation while helping to reduce administrative work. The agreement comes ahead of MRO-PRO's debut as an exhibitor at MRO Europe in Amsterdam and adds Airhub Aviation to the software specialist's growing customer base. The deal highlights growing demand in the aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) sector for digital tools that can streamline maintenance planning, improve operational oversight and increase the commercial value of maintenance activities.

OTHER NEWS

EVIO has joined specialist regional aircraft lessor **TrueNoord's** 'New Technology Hub', a collaborative initiative aimed at supporting the introduction of next-generation regional aircraft technologies designed to cut emissions. Under the collaboration, the companies will examine key economic and operational factors, including maintenance, financing, leasing and infrastructure, while sharing technical and market insights. TrueNoord will provide expertise on the regional aircraft market and benchmarking data, while EVIO will contribute evolving specifications and operating-cost modelling for its EVIO 810 aircraft. "The EVIO 810 is being designed to provide a more responsible and economically viable path forward for regional aviation," said Michael Derman, EVIO's Chairman and Chief Executive. "TrueNoord shares our focus on what it will take for next-generation aircraft to succeed in the real operating environment while delivering meaningful reductions in emissions." The collaboration will combine EVIO's aircraft development expertise with TrueNoord's regional leasing and market knowledge to assess the commercial and operational requirements for introducing lower-emission aircraft technologies into regional aviation, the companies said. The TrueNoord New Technology Hub brings together aircraft developers and other industry stakeholders to examine the commercial and operational challenges associated with next-generation aircraft. Future collaboration could also include airlines, technology providers and other aviation industry participants whose input will be important to the successful introduction of new aircraft technologies.



Image of the EVIO 810 hybrid-electric regional airliner *© EVIO*

Latvia's national airline **airBaltic** is preparing to cut between 500 and 700 positions across its bases in Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn as it adjusts its operations and organisation under a new business plan, the company released. The estimate is based on current planning assumptions and could change as the process progresses. AirBaltic is consulting trade unions on possible reduced workloads for pilots and cabin crew, while new organisational structures for other parts of the business are expected to be defined by mid-October. The airline currently employs about 3,000 people across the Baltic states. The workforce changes are part of a broader plan aimed at strengthening financial stability, focusing the airline's network and improving operational efficiency. The plan also calls for a smaller fleet of Airbus A220-300 aircraft and greater reliance on year-round ACMI partnerships, under which other airlines provide aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance. AirBaltic said the measures are intended to maintain reliable connectivity for Latvia and the wider Baltic region while aligning the airline's cost base and organisational structure with its future scale.

INDUSTRY PEOPLE



Amy Comer

• Pratt & Whitney has named **Amy Comer** President of its Military Engines business, effective January 1, 2027, as the RTX unit prepares for a leadership change. Comer will succeed **Jill Albertelli**, who was recently named Pratt & Whitney President following **Shane Eddy's** retirement at the end of the year. Pratt & Whitney is part of RTX. Comer has more than 20 years' experience in engineering and programme management, supporting the development and sustainment of military and commercial product lines. She currently serves as Vice President of Pratt & Whitney's GTF engine business. "Amy is a trusted leader with deep technical expertise and a proven track record of disciplined execution for our customers," Eddy said. He added that she would build on Albertelli's work and help ensure Pratt & Whitney continues to provide advanced propulsion systems for the US services and allied forces.

INDUSTRY PEOPLE


David Crull

• Aquila Air Capital, an Ireland-based engine lessor backed by funds managed by global alternative asset manager Wafra Inc., has appointed **David Crull** as Chief Financial Officer. Crull brings more than 25 years of experience across the airline, aviation aftermarket and aircraft-leasing sectors. He will join Aquila's leadership team with expertise spanning the financial and operational management of aviation businesses. "I am pleased to welcome David to the Aquila team. He brings deep financial expertise and experience from both the operator and investor perspectives," Chief Executive Officer **Al Wood** said. "David knows how to effectively engage with executive teams, investors and commercial partners to scale and transform businesses. He will enhance our platform's strategic decision-making and accelerate our growth trajectory." Crull has held senior roles across aviation finance, operations, commercial leadership and investing. Most recently, he was Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Jackson Square Aviation. Earlier, he served as chief investment officer of KP Aviation and chief financial officer of Aero Capital Solutions and AeroTurbine. He also held senior finance roles at Spirit Airlines and began his aviation career in maintenance and engineering at American Airlines and Delta Air Lines. Crull holds an MBA from the University of Dallas and a bachelor's degree in professional aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He is a former US Marine.


Johannes Rotter (l) and Blanca Burgos (r) LHT

• Lufthansa Technik (LHT) has made two leadership changes across its global base maintenance network, appointing **Blanca Burgos** as Managing Director of Lufthansa Technik Puerto Rico and **Johannes Rotter** as Managing Director of Lufthansa Technik Budapest. Blanca Burgos has led Lufthansa Technik Puerto Rico's Aguadilla-based operations as Managing Director since September. She joined from FEAM Aero, where she served as Director of Account Management, and brings more than 30 years of MRO experience, including technical and leadership roles at Delta Air Lines and FEAM Aero. She succeeds **Joerg Speri**, who has joined Austrian Airlines as Vice President Technical Division. Johannes Rotter became Managing Director of Lufthansa Technik Budapest in August, following more than 20 years at Austrian Airlines, where he most recently served as Head of Maintenance. He has led numerous operational excellence and digitalisation initiatives, building extensive expertise in aircraft maintenance, engineering and international project management. He succeeds **Thoralf Wagner**, who has taken up the role of Head of Technical Fleet Management at SWISS. "With Blanca Burgos leading our operations in Puerto Rico, we will continue to sharpen our focus on the evolving needs of customers across the Americas, expand our FAA capabilities and strengthen our presence in the region," stated **Marcus Motschenbacher**, Vice President and Chief Operations Officer Aircraft Maintenance Services at Lufthansa Technik. "In Budapest, Johannes Rotter will build on the facility's strong foundation, further enhance operational performance and maintain the exceptional standards of quality and customer service our customers expect. Their leadership will further strengthen and advance our global base maintenance network."


Derek Cheng

• Thales has appointed **Derek Cheng** as Country Director for Singapore and Chief Executive Officer of Thales Solutions Asia, effective October 1, 2026, the French aerospace and defence technology group announced. Cheng succeeds **Emily Tan**, who is leaving the group to pursue a new opportunity. In his new roles, Cheng will oversee more than 2,000 employees across four sites in Singapore, including Thales' largest multi-module digital identity and security manufacturing centre at Ayer Rajah Crescent and its largest avionics production and MRO facility at Changi North Rise. Cheng joins Thales from Vertical Aerospace, where he served as Vice-President and Head of Commercial for Asia-Pacific. He led the development of the company's advanced air mobility business in the region, overseeing commercial operations, business development and strategic partnerships. Before that, he held several senior positions at Airbus in Toulouse and Singapore, including Head of Asia-Pacific for Airbus Urban Mobility and Head of Asia-Pacific for Government and Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships. His responsibilities included regional business development, international cooperation and industrial and sustainable aviation partnerships. Cheng began his career at Singapore's Economic Development Board, where he supported the development of the country's aerospace and high-technology industries. He later served as the agency's regional director for Europe, based in Frankfurt. Thales said Cheng's background in aerospace engineering and experience across the aviation industry would support its operations and growth in Singapore, where the group has manufacturing, engineering and maintenance activities.

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