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BAOA BUSINESS AIRCRAFT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

Wings India 2026

SPECIAL

MEET US AT STALL NO. : 55C

G300 FIRST FLIGHT

PAGE 8

ON THE COVER:
The new Gulfstream G300 has made its first flight, demonstrating significant programme maturity. The aircraft redefines the super midsize segment with a panoramic window, longest cabin, and largest baggage volume.

Cover Photograph: Gulfstream

A SUPPLEMENT TO SP'S AVIATION
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CONTENTS

BOEING BUSINESS JETS (BBJ) IS PROUD TO BRING THE BEST OF INNOVATIONS IN COMMERCIAL AVIATION TO VIP TRAVEL, BY OFFERING A PERSONALISED SPACE WITH SUPERIOR RANGE AND STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY

REGULAR DEPARTMENTS

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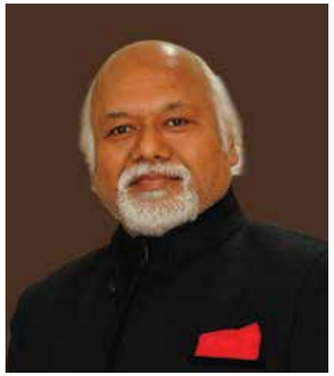
FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

We begin 2026 with cautious optimism for India's business aviation sector, looking ahead to gradual yet meaningful progress during the year. This follows a transitional 2025 marked by intensified regulatory engagement and growing recognition of business aviation as productivity infrastructure even as cost and infrastructure challenges continued to shape industry outcomes.



Dear Reader,
At the outset, the BAOA President's message in this issue outlines a phase of intensified engagement aimed at strengthening India's General and Business Aviation ecosystem. It highlights constructive dialogue with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation through a high-level meeting that addressed key regulatory and operational challenges, including flight duty time limitations, aeromedical processes, pilot utilisation, and infrastructure constraints, with follow-up actions expected. A major concern is the sharp and unintended increase in GST on privately registered aircraft, which has raised effective taxation to nearly 48 per cent, placing significant pressure on private and corporate aviation. BAOA is pursuing relief through representations to the Ministry of Finance and industry bodies. The message also underscores the importance of BizAvIndia 2026 as a platform to advance discussions on ownership models, infrastructure, financing, and advanced air mobility, reinforcing BAOA's commitment to collaborative reform and sustainable growth.

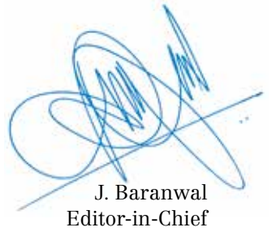
Rajan Mehra's article positions business aviation as a productivity and connectivity enabler rather than a luxury. The article notes growing requirements from corporate, government, and emergency services, alongside a perceptual shift that values time efficiency, multi-city access, and connectivity beyond major hubs. Helicopters are highlighted as an underutilised national capability, critical for healthcare, disaster response, and infrastructure support. Structural tailwinds such as decentralised growth and airport expansion support optimism, even as regulatory friction, taxation, and infrastructure gaps persist. Strengthening domestic MRO capability is identified as a strategic priority.

Jayant Nadkarni's contribution traces the cautious evolution of fractional aircraft ownership in India, arguing that while the business case is strong, success depends on disciplined execution, patience, and operational credibility rather than marketing-led growth. The article highlights a shift from early scepticism to measured confidence, with fractional ownership increasingly recognised as a distinct operating model rather than a variant of charter. It emphasises that fractional and charter models will coexist, serving different user needs. Early growth is expected to be uneven, with sustainability hinging on transparent cost structures, conservative utilisation, and trust-building.

Sanjeev Choudhary examines why globally proven 'first-of-its-kind' aircraft struggle to enter India. He argues the challenge lies not in safety or capability, but in regulatory complexity, ecosystem readiness, and coordination gaps. The article concludes that structured collaboration and proportionate, risk-based validation processes could ease aircraft induction and accelerate the adoption of modern business aircraft in India.

We also have extensive coverage of the Boeing Business Jets with their fact file, the first flight of Gulfstream G300 and the how Pilatus is embedding environmental stewardship into every aspect of its business through their sustainability initiatives.

All this and more in this issue of *BizAvIndia*. Welcome aboard and we wish you many happy landings!



J. Baranwal
Editor-in-Chief

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT, BAOA

PRESIDENT

BUSINESS AIRCRAFT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

Dear Members,

The past few months have been particularly active and productive for the Business Aircraft Operators Association, reflecting our collective commitment to strengthening India's General and Business Aviation (GA/BA) ecosystem through sustained engagement, constructive dialogue, and forward-looking advocacy. This steep increase places Private corporate aviation operations under expanded tax pressure, particularly for companies and entrepreneurs who rely on private ownership models to meet their business travel needs.

Towards the end of December 2025, many members participated in a comprehensive and high-level meeting at the DGCA Headquarters, chaired by the DG, DGCA. This meeting addressed a wide range of critical regulatory and operational issues impacting the GABA sector, including flight duty time limitations, aeromedical processes, pilot utilisation, infrastructure constraints, and emerging operational models. The discussions were open, substantive, and solution-oriented, and several important decisions and directions emerged from this interaction. BAOA has already shared the draft minutes of this meeting with DGCA, and we expect the final minutes to be issued shortly. Once released, members will have clear visibility into the progress being made and the seriousness with which regulatory concerns of our sector are being addressed. I encourage all members to continue sharing their inputs and to actively participate in these quarterly engagements with DGCA, as collective industry participation is key to achieving meaningful and lasting regulatory reform.

In parallel, BAOA continues to strongly pursue the rationalisation of the unfair and unintended GST burden on privately registered aircraft. Under the GST 2 regime, this duty has effectively increased from 28 per cent to nearly 48 per cent, placing an excessive cost burden on legitimate aviation activity and discouraging fleet growth. We are in the process of submitting a detailed budget proposal to the Ministry of Finance, while also taking up this matter through leading industry bodies such as FICCI and CII. Our objective is to build a broad-based, data-driven case for urgent correction of this anomaly in the forthcoming Union Budget.

Looking ahead, we are on the threshold of BizAvIndia 2026, to be held in Hyderabad on January 27, 2026. This edition promises to be one of the most impactful yet, with strong participation from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, DGCA, AERA, international experts, IBAC, and leading global OEMs. Key discussions will cover fractional ownership, aircraft management models, infrastructure and helicopter operations, aeromedical reforms, financing, and the future of Advanced Air Mobility—issues that directly shape the future of our industry. I urge all members to participate actively and help make this event a landmark success.

As always, BAOA remains committed to working closely with its members and our international partners, including IBAC, to enable the sustainable growth of General and Business Aviation as a vital contributor to India's journey towards 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Harsh Vardhan Sharma
President, BAOA.

Business Aircraft Operators Association New Delhi

INDIA'S QUIET AVIATION REVOLUTION IS GAINING MOMENTUM AS BUSINESS AVIATION EMERGES FROM THE MARGINS TO CLAIM ITS ROLE AS A STRATEGIC ECONOMIC ENABLER

Business Aviation in India: **Ready for Take-Off**

BY **RAJAN MEHRA,**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & ACCOUNTABLE MANAGER, CLUB ONE AIR

Today, business aviation is increasingly understood for what it truly represents - a productivity enabler, a connectivity bridge, and a resilience asset for a rapidly evolving economy

PHOTOGRAPH: Gulfstream

INDIA'S CIVIL AVIATION STORY is among the most compelling global growth narratives of the decade. Record aircraft orders, sustained airport expansion, and rising passenger volumes have firmly positioned the country as one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world. Yet, while scheduled airlines and airport infrastructure dominate headlines, another segment—quieter, leaner, and strategically vital—has remained under-represented in public discourse: business aviation.

For decades, business aviation in India operated on the margins, shaped as much by perception as by policy. Long regarded as a mode of travel reserved for the rich and famous, it struggled to gain recognition as a legitimate component of national mobility. That perception, however, is undergoing a decisive shift. Today, business aviation is increasingly understood for what it truly represents: a productivity enabler, a connectivity bridge, and a resilience asset for a rapidly evolving economy. With the right ecosystem support, it is poised to move into a phase of accelerated—indeed exponential—growth.

MORE THAN LUXURY, BUSINESS JETS ARE BECOMING BOARDROOM TOOLS, COMPRESSING TIME, EXPANDING REACH, AND REDEFINING EXECUTIVE PRODUCTIVITY ACROSS INDIA

PHOTOGRAPH: Dassault Aviation

AN UNDERSUPPLIED MARKET, NOT A WEAK ONE

India today operates approximately 350–400 business jets and turboprops, complemented by a civil helicopter fleet of around 250 aircraft. For a nation of 1.4 billion people, a vast and diverse geography, and a rapidly decentralising industrial base, these numbers remain disproportionately low.

This is not a reflection of inadequate demand. On the contrary, demand exists across corporate India, state governments, infrastructure developers, healthcare providers, energy companies, and emergency services. What has constrained growth historically is an operating ecosystem that has not yet evolved in step with India's economic ambitions.

In mature aviation markets, business aviation scales naturally with economic complexity, regional dispersion, and time-critical decision-making. India has entered precisely that phase of development. The current gap between economic reality and business aviation capacity is not a weakness—it is the clearest indicator of future opportunity.

IN A COUNTRY WITH VAST COASTLINES, MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN, DENSE URBAN CENTRES, REMOTE HABITATIONS, AND RECURRING CLIMATE-RELATED EMERGENCIES, HELICOPTERS ARE NOT A LUXURY—THEY ARE A NATIONAL CAPABILITY

FROM EXCLUSIVITY TO EFFICIENCY

Perhaps the most important transformation underway is perceptual. Business aviation is no longer viewed merely as a symbol of exclusivity. Increasingly, it is recognised as a time-efficiency and execution tool—one that allows senior leadership teams to compress travel schedules, conduct multi-city operations in a single day, and access Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities that lack reliable scheduled airline connectivity.

For sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, energy, financial services, and governance, time is not a convenience—it is a cost. Delayed decisions, missed site visits, and fragmented oversight have tangible economic consequences. Business aviation enables decision-makers to deploy time as a strategic resource, improving responsiveness, accountability, and execution speed.

As Indian corporate become more globally integrated, compliance-driven, and outcome-oriented, business aviation increasingly shifts from being discretionary to being operationally rational.

FROM MOUNTAINS TO MEGACITIES, HELICOPTERS REMAIN INDIA'S MOST UNDER UTILISED AVIATION ASSET CRITICAL FOR CONNECTIVITY AND RAPID RESPONSE

PHOTOGRAPH: flywiththeritage / X

HELICOPTERS: INDIA'S MOST UNDERVALUED AVIATION ASSET

If fixed-wing business aviation is under-penetrated, the helicopter segment is even more so. Helicopters play a role far beyond executive transport. They are indispensable for medical evacuation, disaster relief, offshore logistics, infrastructure inspection, pilgrimage circuits, tourism, and access to terrain-challenged or remote regions.

In a country with vast coastlines, mountainous terrain, dense urban centres, remote habitations, and recurring climate-related emergencies, helicopters are not a luxury—they are a national capability. Yet India's civil helicopter fleet remains modest by global benchmarks.

The reasons are structural: limited heliport and helipad infrastructure, fragmented policy frameworks, procedural complexity, and challenging operating economics. Addressing these constraints would unlock one of the fastest-growing segments within Indian aviation—delivering immediate public value while also strengthening national resilience.

STRUCTURAL TAILWINDS ARE NOW FIRMLY IN PLACE

Several long-term forces are now aligning decisively in favour of business aviation growth.

First, economic decentralisation is accelerating. Growth is no longer confined to metropolitan centres. Industrial corridors, manufacturing clusters, logistics hubs, renewable energy projects, and state capitals increasingly require direct, point-to-point connectivity—precisely where business aviation delivers maximum value.

Second, airport infrastructure expansion continues steadily. With over 150 operational airports and ambitious plans for further development, the physical footprint required to support business aviation is improving, even if BA-specific facilities still lag at certain locations.

Third, corporate maturity is deepening. Indian enterprises are more global, more regulated, and more time-sensitive than ever before. Executive productivity, risk management, and governance oversight are now board-level imperatives.

Finally, financial innovation—particularly through emerging aircraft leasing and financing structures linked to IFSC frameworks—offers the potential to reduce capital costs and align Indian operators with global best practices.

Together, these factors create a strong foundation for sustained and scalable growth.

FRICTION THAT CONTINUES TO LIMIT SCALE

Despite these tailwinds, business aviation in India continues to face friction that limits its ability to scale.

Operational constraints remain a primary concern. Limited hangar availability, inconsistent parking access, restricted operating windows at congested airports, and variability in ground handling standards undermine the very flexibility that defines business aviation's value proposition.

Cost and taxation structures also remain misaligned. Business aviation is still frequently categorised as discretionary consumption rather than as productivity infrastructure. This perception influences tax treatment, operating costs, and the pace of reform.

Regulatory complexity further compounds the challenge. Aircraft induction, crew licensing, maintenance approvals, and security clearances often involve multiple agencies and extended timelines. While digitisation and reform efforts are underway, the industry still lacks a truly predictable, single-window operating environment.

In the helicopter segment, the absence of a structured heliport and helipad ecosystem significantly weakens utilisation economics and restricts fleet expansion.

BUILDING AIRCRAFT AT HOME IS ONE STEP BUT MAINTAINING THEM AT HOME IS THE REAL MULTIPLIER. INDIA'S MRO PUSH SIGNALS A SHIFT TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE.

PHOTOGRAPH: Air Works

MRO: THE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE OF SELF-RELIANCE

One of the most encouraging developments in recent years has been India's renewed focus on building a strong domestic Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) ecosystem.

Historically, Indian operators have relied heavily on overseas MRO facilities, resulting in higher costs, longer aircraft downtime, and significant outflow of foreign exchange. Strengthening domestic MRO capability is therefore critical—not only for cost efficiency, but also for technical self-reliance and long-term capacity building.

Recent approvals allowing complex checks to be carried out within India mark an important shift. Such developments reduce overseas dependency, conserve foreign exchange, shorten aircraft downtime, and build indigenous technical expertise. Equally important, they signal growing regulatory confidence in Indian operators and maintenance capability—an essential ingredient for long-term sectoral growth.

GLOBAL CONTEXT: HOW FAR INDIA CAN GO

Globally, business aviation is deeply embedded into economic infrastructure. In the United States and Europe, business jets and helicopters are routinely used by corporations, governments, and emergency services as productivity tools rather than symbols of luxury. Even smaller economies in Asia-Pacific operate significantly larger fleets relative to population and geography.

India, by contrast, is still at an early adoption stage. This gap represents headroom, not disadvantage. As infrastructure improves and operating frameworks mature, India has the potential to leapfrog stages of growth rather than follow a linear path. The opportunity is not merely to catch up—but to design a business aviation ecosystem aligned with India's unique scale, diversity, and development priorities.

THE GROWTH OUTLOOK: WHY THE NEXT DECADE MATTERS

Market indicators already suggest steady mid-single-digit growth in India's business jet segment over the coming decade, with the helicopter segment offering even greater upside if infrastructure and policy bottlenecks are addressed.

Crucially, India remains at an early adoption stage. Even modest shifts in corporate travel behaviour—from scheduled airlines to business aviation for time-critical missions—would necessitate the induction of hundreds of additional aircraft. This is not incremental growth. It is structural expansion.

CONCLUSION: FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM

Business aviation in India is no longer waiting for validation. The perception that it exists only for a privileged few has given way to a clearer understanding of its role as national productivity and connectivity infrastructure.

With changing mindsets, evolving policy frameworks, strengthening MRO capability, and a maturing corporate ecosystem, business aviation stands at the threshold of its next chapter.

The runway is laid. The engines are warming up. Business aviation in India is ready for take-off! BAI

Gulfstream G300 Signals **the Next Evolution**

First Flight of the all-new Gulfstream G300 redefines expectations and marks the start of an ambitious new chapter in Super-Midsize Business Jets

BY **ROHIT GOEL**

THE G300'S MAIDEN FLIGHT MARKS THE MOMENT GULFSTREAM'S NEXT-GENERATION AMBITIONS MOVE DECISIVELY FROM DESIGN INTENT TO AIRBORNE REALITY

PHOTOGRAPHS: Gulfstream

THE G300'S CABIN IS ENGINEERED AS A WORKING ENVIRONMENT BALANCING SPACE, LIGHT, AND PRESSURISATION TO REDUCE FATIGUE ON LONG MISSIONS

ON DECEMBER 5, 2025, Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation proudly announced that its brand-new Gulfstream G300 super-midsize business jet had successfully completed its first flight, a defining moment in the aircraft's development and a key milestone for Gulfstream's next-generation fleet.

Departing Ben Gurion International Airport in Israel at 8:05 a.m. local time, the G300 prototype remained airborne for 2 hours and 25 minutes, reaching an altitude of 30,000 feet and cruising at Mach 0.75 before returning safely to its departure field. This inaugural flight demonstrated the maturity of the programme and officially launched the aircraft's flight test campaign — a structured series of evaluations that will lead toward certification and entry into service.

A NEW BENCHMARK IN THE SUPER-MIDSIZE SEGMENT

Gulfstream characterises the G300 as a significant evolutionary step for the super-midsize category, integrating the company's latest design, technology and comfort achievements. The aircraft will feature signature Gulfstream Panoramic Oval Windows as well as an all-new Harmony Flight Deck, which includes next-generation avionics to enhance safety and operational efficiency.

Introduced to the world on September 30, 2025 at Gulfstream's Savannah, Georgia headquarters, the G300 is intended to succeed the highly successful Gulfstream G280 and elevate expectations for performance, avionics and cabin experience. At its core, the G300 is engineered to serve the demanding missions typical of super-midsize operators — those who require intercontinental range, efficient performance, advanced avionics and a premium cabin environment, all within a versatile and cost-effective package.

DESIGN AND TECHNICAL ATTRIBUTES

From the outset, Gulfstream emphasised that the G300 embodies its "visionary fleet" philosophy: a family of aircraft that blends innovation with proven engineering principles across all size classes.

The G300's airframe and systems are designed to deliver a compelling mix of distance capability and operational flexibility:

- **Range and Cruise Performance:** The aircraft is designed to cover up to 3,600 nautical miles while cruising at Mach 0.80, enabling non-stop flights between key business markets. At a higher cruise speed of Mach 0.84, a still-strong range of approximately 3,000 nautical miles is achievable.
- **Advanced Propulsion:** Twin Honeywell HTF7250G turbofan engines power the G300, pairing performance with efficiency for cost-effective operations across its mission profile.
- **Flight Testing and Development:** Prior to its first flight, the G300 programme completed more than 2,000 hours of ground testing, laying the groundwork for a robust flight evaluation phase that will involve multiple prototypes.

These performance metrics place the G300 at the upper

end of the super-midsize category, capable of linking continental business hubs with minimal stops while maintaining operational efficiency and reliability.

AVIONICS AND PILOT-CENTRIC INNOVATION

Central to the G300's cockpit philosophy is the Harmony Flight Deck, Gulfstream's latest avionics suite designed to enhance situational awareness, ease of operation and safety. The aircraft's navigation and control systems are expected to feature highly intuitive interfaces, integrated automation and advanced predictive tools that streamline pilot workload and decision-making.

This approach builds on Gulfstream's established strategy of offering cutting-edge avionics that not only meet but often exceed regulatory and customer expectations in business aviation, contributing to operational consistency across the Gulfstream fleet.

"WITH ITS COMBINATION OF SAFETY, TECHNOLOGY, PERFORMANCE AND CABIN COMFORT, THE G300 IS A GAME CHANGER FOR THE SUPER-MIDSIZE CATEGORY" — MARK BURNS, PRESIDENT, GULFSTREAM

CABIN COMFORT AND PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

Passenger experience sits at the heart of the G300's design. Gulfstream's official material highlights the aircraft's cabin environment as a defining strength of the programme:

- **Spacious, Well-Appointed Interior:** The G300's cabin has been engineered to provide generous space for up to 10 passengers, with two distinct living areas that support productivity, relaxation and social interaction.
- **Panoramic Windows and Natural Light:** Signature Gulfstream Panoramic Oval Windows bring ample daylight into the cabin, enhancing the sense of space and visual comfort.
- **Pressurisation and Air Quality:** Gulfstream emphasises class-leading cabin altitude and air quality, with full-fresh-air circulation and environmental systems that contribute to reduced passenger fatigue on longer flights.

These elements collectively reflect Gulfstream's longstanding commitment to setting premium standards in cabin design, where comfort, aesthetics and passenger well-being are integral to the overall experience.

MARKET POSITIONING AND TARGET CUSTOMERS

As the successor to the G280, the G300 is positioned to attract a broad cross-section of super-midsize business jet buyers:

- **Corporate Operators:** Firms requiring reliable, long-range travel for executives and specialists, with the flexibility to reach smaller airports closer to final destinations.
- **Charter and Fractional Operators:** Service providers who value flexibility and performance that can distinguish their offerings in a competitive market.
- **High-Net-Worth Individuals and Private Owners:** Customers seeking a blend of trans-continental capability, luxurious cabin comfort and advanced avionics for personal and business travel.

The G300 targets a segment where aircraft must balance size, operational efficiency and premium service quality — a balance that Gulfstream aims to achieve through its integrated design and technology choices.

PATH TO ENTRY INTO SERVICE

Following its first successful flight, Gulfstream's next major objective is to carry the G300 through its flight test programme, a comprehensive process that will validate performance, safety and reliability across all phases of operation. Successful certification will pave the way for customer deliveries, currently anticipated in 2027.

The deployment of additional test aircraft will accelerate data collection and fine-tuning, ensuring the G300 meets both regulatory requirements and customer expectations.

"BUILDING ON THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL G280 PROGRAMME, THE G300 WILL REENERGISE THE CATEGORY WITH ITS HEIGHTENED TECHNOLOGY AND SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS, ALONGSIDE THE LEGENDARY COMFORT AND STYLING OF A GULFSTREAM" — MARK BURNS, PRESIDENT, GULFSTREAM

CONCLUSION: A STRATEGIC LEAP FORWARD

The first flight of the Gulfstream G300 stands as a testament to Gulfstream Aerospace's enduring commitment to innovation within business aviation. With its combination of trans-continental range, advanced avionics, refined cabin environment and rigorous development process, the G300 is poised to become a compelling choice in the competitive super-midsize segment.

As the programme transitions from early flight testing to certification and customer delivery, industry observers and prospective operators will be watching closely to see how Gulfstream's new entrant reshapes expectations for performance, comfort and operational excellence in its class. BAI

G300 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE	
Maximum Range	3,600 nm
Long-Range Cruise	Mach 0.80
High-Speed Cruise Range	3,000 nm
High-Speed Cruise	Mach 0.84
Maximum Operating Mach Number (Mmo)	Mach 0.85
Takeoff Distance (SL, ISA, MTOW)	4,780 ft
Initial Cruise Altitude	43,000 ft
Maximum Cruise Altitude	45,000 ft
CABIN	
Living Areas	2
Seats	Up to 10
Sleeps	Up to 5
Cabin Altitude	4,800 ft at 41,000 ft
Gulfstream Panoramic Oval Windows	10
Vacuum Lavatory	Aft
WEIGHTS	
Maximum Takeoff	39,750 lb
Maximum Landing	32,700 lb
Maximum Zero Fuel	28,200 lb
Basic Operating (including 2 crew)	24,380 lb
Maximum Payload	3,820 lb
Maximum Payload/Full Fuel	900 lb
Maximum Fuel	14,620 lb
SYSTEMS	
Avionics	Harmony Flight Deck
Engines	Two Honeywell HTF7250G
Rated Takeoff Thrust (each)	7,624 lb
MEASUREMENTS	
Finished Cabin Height	6 ft 1 in
Finished Cabin Width	6 ft 11 in
Cabin Length (excluding baggage)	27 ft 7 in
Total Interior Length	34 ft
Cabin Volume	1,005 cu ft
Baggage Compartment Volume	120 cu ft
Exterior Height	21 ft 4 in
Exterior Length	68 ft 7 in
Overall Wingspan	63 ft

Source: gulfstream.com

THE G300 INTRODUCES GULFSTREAM'S LATEST AVIONICS PHILOSOPHY DESIGNED TO SIMPLIFY PILOT WORKLOAD WHILE ENHANCING SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

PHOTOGRAPH: Textron Aviation

INDIA'S FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP MODEL WILL NOT BE BUILT ON PROMISES, BUT ON SYSTEMS, RESTRAINT, AND THE ABILITY TO DELIVER CONSISTENTLY

The Dawn of Fractional Aircraft Ownership in India: An Update

BY **JAYANT NADKARNI**

The arrival of fractional ownership in India will be measured by the slow, deliberate building of trust and operational credibility

THE STORY SO FAR

When the idea of fractional aircraft ownership in India was first explored a few years back, there was optimism and scepticism in equal measure. While the business logic was sound, yet the ecosystem felt tentative. There were many nay-sayers. Is India ready for this model? Could it be executed with discipline and professionalism? Would customers see through excess marketing, and demand substance? And, of course, would the Government dismantle the "well-known" roadblocks: not being elaborated here?

Those questions have not disappeared. If anything, they have matured.

This update is not about reintroducing the concept or reiterating why fractional ownership makes sense for India. That groundwork has already been done. There is hope in the market. The focus here is narrower and more practical. Let's assume the enabling clearances from the Government are a given, a matter of time. How will the model take root in India? To understand this, let us first back-track a bit.

FROM EARLY EXPLORATION TO CAUTIOUS CONFIDENCE

The most noticeable change over the past few years is psychological. Stakeholders have moved from curiosity to quiet conviction. Fractional ownership is no longer treated as an imported novelty, or a clever packaging of charter and ownership. It is increasingly viewed as a distinct operating philosophy that demands its own rules, behaviours, and discipline.

This shift matters. Early discussions were often enthusiastic but abstract. Today, conversations are more grounded. Some players are jumping the gun in their messaging to the market. Others follow a restrained, more disciplined approach as they know that prospective users will ask sharp questions around availability guarantees, cost predictability, and programme governance.

These are all signs of an awakening market, where some participants are thinking seriously and others more speculatively.

FLATTERING NARRATIVES

Every emerging model carries with it the risk of flattering narratives. Fractional ownership is particularly susceptible because it sounds elegant. Shared ownership of a premium asset, lower capital commitment, predictable access, and professional management. On paper, it is difficult not to be convinced.

The danger lies in mistaking narrative elegance for operational simplicity.

Fractional ownership is not a dressed-up version of charter. It is operationally more complex. It requires tight planning, conservative assumptions, and constant coordination between multiple stakeholders with overlapping interests.

Programmes that under estimate this complexity, often stumble early. Not because the concept is flawed, but because execution is rushed. While India "can do without" any more aviation failures, it is equally true that India "can deliver well" but with players who place execution on a premium.

FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP IS NO LONGER TREATED AS AN IMPORTED NOVELTY, OR A CLEVER PACKAGING OF CHARTER AND OWNERSHIP

COEXISTENCE, NOT SUBSTITUTION

One misconception that still surfaces occasionally is the idea that fractional ownership must displace charter to succeed. This framing is unhelpful and inaccurate. Charter and fractional ownership, address different needs, they will coexist, and in fact feed each other.

Charter offers immediacy and flexibility minus the capital demanded by ownership. It mostly favours the sporadic users. Whereas fractional ownership offers consistency, predictability for heavier users, with a degree of control that only ownership gives. An overlap with charter exists, but it is highly limited. The presence of both models invigorates and expands the overall market by catering to different travel philosophies demanded by customers. Both models strengthen each other by offering choice.

GREENSHOOTS WILL BE UNEVEN, AND THAT IS FINE

As fractional ownership begins to take shape in India, it will probably not do so uniformly. There will not be a single template or dominant structure that immediately prevails. Instead, multiple sub models are likely to emerge, each testing a different hypothesis.

Some will have slick websites, some aggressive, some more restrained. Some may focus on specific aircraft categories. Others may anchor themselves around defined geographies or closed customer groups. Some will even repackage bulk charters or memberships, and present them as fractional ownership, which discerning clients will see through. The point is that there will be offerings for different customer types.

Whatever be the sub-model, early traction in one segment should not be mistaken for universal validation. Fractional green shoots will probably appear selectively. And that selectivity is healthy. But customers also need to be selective to protect themselves. Internationally, if there are successful premium services like NetJets or Flexjet, there is also the odd painful bankruptcy case like Jet It. In 2023, Jet It went from 21 HondaJets down to zero. That process hurt many fractional owners.

The programmes that endure and scale, will be those that prioritise programme robustness over speed. Robustness in how utilisation is allocated and value is provided, how costs are reconciled, and how downtime and contingencies are handled. Above all, robustness in how expectations are set and reset.

These qualities do not come from loud aggressive marketing, but they are the foundations of market trust.

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF PATIENCE

Patience is perhaps the most underrated requirement for fractional ownership. It is demanded of customers, operators, and most critically, of programme builders.

Utilisation must be ramped up conservatively. Ideally, fleet expansion must follow demand, not precede it. Early users must be treated as partners in a journey, and not merely as customers. Saying no to marginal demand or fringe customer types is often more important than saying yes to early revenue.

This patience can feel counter intuitive in a market accustomed to scale narratives and hype. Yet, international experience suggests that fractional programmes that grow foundations slowly tend to grow sustainably. Once credibility is established, momentum builds naturally. Referrals replace advertising. Confidence replaces persuasion.

India is now at a stage where this long arc approach is possible, provided it is embraced deliberately.

A MATURING INDUSTRY CONVERSATION

This is an evolution the industry needs to embark upon. Discussions need to be less about ambition and more about mechanics. Less about disruption and more about stewardship.

Fractional programmes require a different mindset than traditional charter operations. This is not to suggest that one model is better than the other. Fractional ownership simply

IN FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP, SUCCESS IS NOT DEFINED BY HOW FAST FLEETS GROW BUT BY HOW WELL EXPECTATIONS ARE MANAGED

PHOTOGRAPH: Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

demands higher planning discipline, more transparent reporting, and a service philosophy centred on predictability rather than flexibility alone.

The questions asked by prospective fractional users also need to become more detailed in nature. This level of scrutiny will be a positive evolutionary sign. Fractional ownership thrives in environments where customers are informed and demanding. We have not yet reached this stage, but we must.

IS SUCCESS INEVITABLE

Is fractional aircraft ownership in India inevitable? While the ball is not yet netted, the conditions today are materially stronger than they were when the concept was first introduced many years back to the government, the media, and early intrigued customers.

The business logic is there. The ecosystem is more informed, if not fully. Expectations are more realistic, if not uniformly disseminated. Conversations are shifting from broad advocacy to planning how. These are meaningful signals.

What happens next will depend on how responsibly the earliest programmes behave. Early success stories will shape perception more than any marketing campaign. Equally, early missteps could slow adoption significantly if lessons are not absorbed.

This places a burden on those building quietly behind the scenes to get the fundamentals right.

In every emerging category, there are participants who choose visibility and those who choose preparation first. Some announce early to test the market response. Others may prefer to observe, build, test, and refine before speaking. There is merit in both approaches. Whatever be the approach, in a trust led market like business aviation, only execution consistency will ultimately determine success.

LOOKING AHEAD

There is hope that the Government will allow the model soon. Once that happens, the first chapter of fractional aircraft ownership in India will be written. Will it be written by a single announcement, a headline grabbing launch? Or will it be shaped by several players making decisions over time?

Which sub models will stabilise? Which customer segments will commit early? Which programmes resist the urge to oversell? Which charter operators will adapt their operating philosophy? Or will entirely new players emerge? The answers will emerge gradually.

Fractional ownership in India, if it succeeds, will likely not arrive dramatically. It will arrive quietly, through credibility, consistency, and trust. That may not make for sensational headlines, but it is precisely how enduring models are built.

The sun is finally clearing the horizon. The dawn the industry envisioned three years ago has proven to be a slowlongdawn. But there is real light now. Let's see if it brightens and ushers in fractional aircraft ownership for India. BAI

The author is former COO of Invision Air, former President BAOA and currently Managing Director of a fractional focussed company- Flightshares. He has written extensively on the subject over the years.

THE BBJ FAMILY PROVIDES CABIN SPACE ROUGHLY THREE TIMES THAT OF TRADITIONAL BUSINESS JETS, ALLOWING FOR MULTIPLE FUNCTIONAL ZONES WITHIN A SINGLE AIRCRAFT

PHOTOGRAPH: Boeing

Ultra-Large Business Jets: **The Ultimate Expression of VIP Travel**

BY **ROHIT GOEL**

Boeing Business Jets (BBJ) combines commercial-grade performance, unparalleled cabin space and intercontinental range to redefine global VIP mobility

IN A WORLD WHERE global mobility, discretion and productivity increasingly define success, ultra-large business jets have emerged as the ultimate instruments of VIP travel. Far removed from the traditional perception of private jets as compact executive transports, these aircraft represent a category of their own—offering intercontinental reach, residential-scale interiors and the ability to operate as mobile command centres in the sky. At the heart of this evolution stands Boeing Business Jets (BBJ), the exclusive business and VIP aircraft division of The Boeing Company, whose platforms have come to define the uppermost tier of private aviation.

Ultra-large business jets cater to a unique set of missions. They are designed for leaders who must traverse continents without interruption, for institutions that demand absolute reliability and security, and for individuals who expect uncompromised comfort over journeys lasting 15 hours or more. As international engagement intensifies and travel schedules become increasingly complex, these aircraft are no longer symbols of luxury alone—they are strategic assets that enable seamless global operations.

BOEING BUSINESS JETS (BBJ) SPECIFICATIONS

	Maximum Cabin Altitude	Range	Cabin Area	Cargo Volume	Total (variable) Operating Cost/hr
BBJ 737 MAX (8 passenger)					
BBJ 737-7	6,500 ft	12,000 km | 6,500 nmi	82.1 m^2 | 884 ft^2	31.8 m^3 | 1,125 ft^3	$5,235
BBJ 737-8	6,500 ft	11,800 km | 6,350 nmi	95.2 m^2 | 1,025 ft^2	43.2 m^3 | 1,526 ft^3	$5,436
BBJ 737-9	6,500 ft	11,700 km | 6,320 nmi	104 m^2 | 1,120 ft^2	50.8 m^3 | 1,797 ft^3	$5,700
BBJ 777X (75 passenger)					
BBJ 777-8	6,000 ft	21,570 km | 11,645 nmi	302.5 m^2 | 3,256 ft^2	170.2 m^3 | 6,012 ft^3	$14,760
BBJ 777-9	6,000 ft	20,420 km | 11,025 nmi	342.7 m^2 | 3,689 ft^2	218.2 m^3 | 7,707 ft^3	$15,050
BBJ 787 (25 passenger)					
BBJ 787-8	6,000 ft	18,445 km | 9,960 nmi	217.4 m^2 | 2,340 ft^2	124.5 m^3 | 4,397 ft^3	$10,320
BBJ 787-9	6,000 ft	17,550 km | 9,475 nmi	249.72 m^2 | 2,688 ft^2	154.4 m^3 | 5,452 ft^3	$10,910
BBJ 787-10	6,000 ft	16,715 km | 9,025 nmi	278.9 m^2 | 3,002 ft^2	175.2 m^3 | 6,178 ft^3	$11,465

Source: https://businessjets.boeing.com

INNOVATIONS THAT REDEFINED VIP TRAVEL

One of the defining characteristics of Boeing Business Jets is its ability to translate advanced commercial aviation technologies into the private aviation space. Every BBJ aircraft is derived from a proven Boeing commercial platform, including the 737 MAX, 787 Dreamliner and the 777X family. This heritage brings with it decades of engineering maturity, operational refinement and system redundancy—attributes that are especially critical for ultra-long-range VIP missions.

In aircraft such as the BBJ 777X, innovations like smooth-ride technology help counteract turbulence, delivering a calmer and more comfortable experience for passengers during extended flights. Electronically dimmable windows eliminate the need for mechanical shades, allowing passengers to manage natural light seamlessly while enhancing cabin aesthetics and privacy. Advanced cabin environmental systems maintain lower cabin altitudes and improved air quality, reducing fatigue and enabling travellers to arrive refreshed even after the longest nonstop sectors.

Equally significant is Boeing's evolving approach to cabin customisation. Through initiatives such as BBJ Select, Boeing has introduced pre-engineered yet premium interior configurations that reduce completion timelines while preserving the exclusivity expected at this level. Owners can tailor layouts to include private suites, conference rooms, lounges or entertainment areas, ensuring that each aircraft reflects its mission profile as much as its owner's personal style.

WHO USES ULTRA-LARGE BUSINESS JETS—AND WHY

The capabilities offered by ultra-large business jets naturally attract a select but diverse group of users. Governments and heads of state represent a significant segment of BBJ customers, using these aircraft as airborne diplomatic platforms and secure command environments. The ability to fly non-stop between continents, combined with commercial-grade reliability and global support infrastructure, makes BBJ aircraft particularly well suited for sovereign missions where readiness and security are non-negotiable.

Political leaders and senior officials rely on these aircraft to remain operational while travelling, conducting meetings, maintaining secure communications and managing state affairs in transit. For such users, the aircraft is not merely transportation but an extension of governance itself.

Among global business leaders and ultra-high-net-worth individuals, BBJ aircraft function as private offices in the sky. Executives managing enterprises across multiple continents value the productivity, privacy and control that ultra-large business jets provide. With dedicated workspaces, meeting rooms and rest areas, BBJ aircraft allow leaders to maintain momentum across time zones without sacrificing efficiency.

Celebrities and high-profile public figures also gravitate toward ultra-large business jets for their discretion and adaptability. The ability to travel privately with family, staff or security personnel—while enjoying personalised interiors and extended range—makes these aircraft ideal for individuals whose schedules and visibility demand absolute privacy.

THE APPEAL OF BOEING BUSINESS JETS (BBJ) AIRCRAFT LIES NOT JUST IN PRESTIGE, BUT IN THEIR ABILITY TO DELIVER CONFIDENCE, CONTINUITY AND CAPABILITY AT A GLOBAL SCALE

Across all these user groups, the appeal of BBJ aircraft lies not just in prestige, but in their ability to deliver confidence, continuity and capability at a global scale.

LIVING AND WORKING AT 40,000 FEET

What truly distinguishes ultra-large business jets from smaller private aircraft is their sheer scale. BBJ platforms offer cabin volumes that enable environments closer to luxury residences or corporate headquarters than conventional aircraft interiors.

The BBJ 737 MAX family already provides cabin space roughly three times that of traditional business jets, allowing for multiple functional zones within a single aircraft. Owners can move freely between lounges, dining areas, offices and private rooms, supported by wide aisles and generous ceiling heights.

The concept of space reaches its pinnacle with the BBJ 777X series. With up to 343 square metres of cabin area, these aircraft offer the largest interiors available in the business aviation market. This unprecedented volume allows for true residential layouts, complete with master bedrooms, guest suites, boardrooms, wellness areas and full-size galleys. For ultra-long-haul missions, such spatial freedom fundamentally transforms the onboard experience, turning travel time into usable, comfortable living time.




WITH BBJ SELECT, BOEING IS OFFERING A WIDE RANGE OF PRE-DESIGNED CABIN LAYOUTS AND CONFIGURATIONS TO EXPEDITE INSTALLATION, WHILE LOWERING THE TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE OF THE AIRPLANE

PHOTOGRAPHS: Boeing Business Jets

REDRAWING THE WORLD'S MAP

Range capability is one of the most decisive factors in ultra-large business jet selection, and this is where BBJ platforms consistently stand apart. The BBJ 737 MAX family offers ranges of up to approximately 6,600 nautical miles, enabling direct connections between major global hubs without refuelling.

The BBJ 777X family pushes these boundaries even further. With the BBJ 777-8 capable of flying up to 11,645 nautical miles and the BBJ 777-9 offering around 11,000 nautical miles, these aircraft can link virtually any two cities on Earth non-stop. Such capability eliminates the need for intermediate stops, enhances security and allows VIP travellers to move globally on their own terms.

For missions that demand speed, discretion and continuity, this level of range is not a luxury—it is a strategic advantage.

THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF VIP MOBILITY

Beyond luxury and performance, BBJ aircraft benefit from the operational strength of Boeing's commercial aviation ecosystem. These aircraft are designed for high utilisation, with some platforms capable of operating more than 4,000 flight hours annually. This durability, combined with Boeing's global maintenance and support network, ensures that BBJ operators enjoy levels of reliability rarely matched in private aviation.

The result is an aircraft that delivers not only exceptional comfort and range, but also predictable performance and long-term value—qualities that are critical for governments, corporations and individuals alike.

Ultra-large business jets represent the highest expression of private aviation, where technology, space, comfort and range converge to create truly global mobility solutions. Boeing Business Jets has played a defining role in shaping this category, drawing on its commercial aviation heritage to deliver aircraft that operate at a level few others can match.

Through continuous innovation, unmatched cabin volumes, intercontinental range and commercial-grade reliability, BBJ aircraft have redefined what it means to travel privately. They are not simply aircraft, but airborne environments—designed to support leadership, productivity and comfort wherever the mission demands. In doing so, Boeing Business Jets continues to set the benchmark for ultra-large business jets in the world of VIP travel. BAI

INTRODUCING 'FIRST-OF-KIND' AIRCRAFT: STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVES IN THE ECOSYSTEM

Why Are 'First-of-Its-Kind' **Aircraft Challenging to Introduce in India?**

BY **SANJEEV CHOUDHARY,**
VICE PRESIDENT – AIRCRAFT SALES (SOUTH ASIA) AT JETHQ

India's difficulty in inducting globally proven business aircraft stems from regulatory complexity and ecosystem readiness challenges which slow the entry of first-of-its-kind aircraft despite strong operator demand

ILLUSTRATION: SP's Team

INDIA TODAY PRESENTS A paradox in business aviation. On one hand, it has a mature civil aviation regulator, experienced operators, globally trained pilots, and increasingly capable mažintenance organisations. On the other hand, several modern and proven business aircraft—successfully operating across North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia—remain conspicuously absent from Indian skies. This is particularly true for aircraft that are 'first-of-its-kind' in India, despite having long and well-established global service records.

UNDERSTANDING THE 'FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND' CHALLENGE

In the Indian context, a 'first-of-its-kind' aircraft does not imply a new or experimental design. Rather, it refers to an aircraft model that has not previously been registered or operated in India, even though it may have been certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and may have been in active global service for many years.

Examples illustrate this anomaly clearly. The Cessna Citation Latitude, certified in 2015, has more than 450 aircraft flying worldwide, yet none operate in India. Similarly, the Gulfstream G280 has been in service since 2012, with over 300 aircraft operating globally, but not a single example is registered in India. These are not niche aircraft; they are mainstream platforms with proven safety records and robust global support ecosystems.

TYPE CERTIFICATION ACCEPTANCE AND REGULATORY FAMILIARITY

One of the primary hurdles lies in the acceptance of type certification by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). While India recognises FAA and EASA certifications in principle, the practical process of validation often involves additional documentation, internal assessments, and technical familiarisation. This process is essential from a safety oversight perspective, but it can become time-consuming and costly when applied to aircraft that already have extensive global operational histories.

Is there scope for India to simplify and accelerate its validation process—without compromising safety—for aircraft that have already undergone rigorous certification by established global regulators and have a proven operational track record? This is not an argument for dilution of safety standards, but for proportionality and efficiency aligned with global best practices.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR REGULATORS AND OVERSIGHT AGENCIES

For any new aircraft type, the regulator must ensure that it can effectively oversee operations and continuing airworthiness. This requires training flight operations inspectors, airworthiness inspectors, and design directorate personnel. Such training often involves overseas travel to OEM facilities or approved simulator centres, with associated costs and scheduling challenges.

In practice, these costs are frequently borne by the operator or the OEM, particularly when only one aircraft is being inducted. For a single pre-owned aircraft, this can render the entire acquisition commercially unattractive, even before operational considerations are addressed.

MRO READINESS AND THE INVESTMENT DILEMMA

Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) organisations form a critical pillar of the aviation ecosystem. Introducing a new aircraft type requires investment in tooling, ground support equipment, spare parts provisioning, and training of Aircraft Maintenance Engineers (AMEs). These investments are capital-intensive and difficult to justify without assurance of fleet depth.

As a result, MROs are often reluctant to commit resources until an aircraft is firmly inducted, while regulators seek evidence of maintenance capability before granting approvals. This circular dependency creates a classic chicken-and-egg situation that stalls progress.

ONE OF THE PRIMARY HURDLES LIES IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF TYPE CERTIFICATION BY THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION (DGCA)

HUMAN CAPITAL CONSTRAINTS: PILOTS AND ENGINEERS

Pilot induction adds another layer of complexity. Even after completing type-rating training, pilots typically require supervised operating experience before being released as Captains. For a new aircraft type, this often necessitates bringing in foreign instructor pilots, which involves visa processing, security clearances, and significant cost escalation.

Similarly, engineers trained in anticipation of aircraft induction risk losing currency if the process is delayed. This creates additional reluctance for early investment in skills development.

INDIA'S PRE-OWNED AIRCRAFT MARKET REALITY

India is predominantly a pre-owned aircraft market. Buyers prioritise capital efficiency, faster availability, and lower depreciation exposure. While this market reality aligns well with operator needs, it does not always align with OEM incentives, which are naturally focused on new aircraft sales.

However, once a model is established through even a small pre-owned fleet, buyer confidence improves, support infrastructure develops, and the market becomes more receptive to new aircraft of the same type.

THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF OEMS IN ECOSYSTEM CREATION

OEMs can play a transformative role in addressing the first-of-its-kind challenge. By proactively supporting the induction of pre-owned aircraft—through regulatory engagement, documentation support, training facilitation, and coordination with local MROs—OEMs can accelerate ecosystem development.

Such involvement should be viewed as a proportionate strategic investment rather than a cost burden. The long-term beneficiaries are the OEMs themselves, through increased aftermarket revenue, expanded market share, and improved prospects for future new-aircraft sales.

CONCLUSION: A COORDINATION CHALLENGE, NOT A CAPABILITY GAP

The challenges associated with introducing first-of-its-kind aircraft in India are not rooted in a lack of capability or commitment to safety. They arise from fragmented responsibilities, misaligned incentives, and the absence of a coordinated induction framework.

With structured collaboration between regulators, OEMs, MROs, and operators—and with proportionate, risk-based validation pathways—India can enable faster, safer, and more cost-effective induction of globally proven aircraft. A country renowned for innovation and engineering excellence can certainly design solutions that allow its business aviation community to benefit from modern technology without compromising regulatory integrity. BAI

Sanjeev Choudhary is a senior business aviation professional, with over 20 years of experience, spanning aircraft sales, market entry, and fleet advisory across helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

AIMING TO ACCELERATE THE SCALING OF SOLAR FUELS IN AVIATION, PILATUS AND SYNHELION HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Pilatus Aircraft: **Driving Sustainability Across the Board**

BY **ROHIT GOEL**

From renewable energy and sustainable fuel partnerships to eco-centric infrastructure and corporate responsibility, Pilatus is embedding environmental stewardship into every aspect of its business

PILATUS AIRCRAFT LTD, THE renowned Swiss aircraft manufacturer based in Stans, has long been known for its engineering excellence and versatile aircraft such as the PC-12, PC-24 and PC-21. In recent years, the company has broadened its focus to place sustainability at the heart of its corporate strategy, embedding environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles into its operations, infrastructure, products and partnerships. Drawing exclusively from official company sources and related press releases, this article explores how Pilatus is pursuing sustainability across its business and beyond.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Pilatus

A CULTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Pilatus describes environmental protection as a fundamental part of its corporate ethos — "a long-standing Pilatus belief" that is woven into the company's vision and operational practices. This commitment spans from responsibly managing raw materials and energy to optimising manufacturing processes and minimising consumption wherever possible. Pilatus holds ISO 14001 certification, reflecting its structured approach to environmental management and formalising sustainability across all departments.

The company's environmental initiatives begin at its headquarters in Stans, where renewable energy plays a central role. Most of the electricity used is sourced from Swiss hydropower, while buildings are predominantly heated using renewable energy generated from a regional wood-gas power plant fuelled by locally grown forest timber and waste wood. These measures not only reduce the company's carbon footprint but also demonstrate how sustainability is integrated into everyday operations.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ECO-CLEVER INFRASTRUCTURE

Pilatus has actively invested in renewable energy infrastructure. A notable example is the commissioning of a large photovoltaic (solar) power plant at its headquarters in the canton of Nidwalden. With nearly 5,000 solar modules covering vast rooftop space and producing close to 1.973 megawatts of peak power, the installation generates around 1.7 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity annually — enough to meet the power needs of over 300 average homes. This project is part of Pilatus' roadmap towards climate-neutral aircraft production and underscores the company's ambition to leverage clean energy for its operations.

Sustainability also informs Pilatus' building strategies. New constructions and renovations adhere to recognised international standards — for instance, meeting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification where feasible. Local timber is used extensively, particularly in timber-frame hangars that reduce dependence on steel and reflect Pilatus' dedication to sustainable construction materials and techniques.

PILATUS HAS BEEN PROACTIVE IN THIS DOMAIN, NOT ONLY CERTIFYING ITS AIRCRAFT TO FLY ON SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL (SAF) BUT ALSO SCALING PARTICIPATION IN NEXT-GENERATION FUEL TECHNOLOGIES

WINGS OF CHANGE: SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL

In aviation, one of the most critical pathways to reducing environmental impact is the adoption of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). Pilatus has been proactive in this domain, not only certifying its aircraft — including popular models such as the PC-12 and PC-24 — to fly on SAF but also scaling participation in next-generation fuel technologies.

A major milestone in this journey is Pilatus' strategic partnership with Synhelion, a Swiss startup and spin-off from ETH Zurich focused on producing solar fuels using concentrated solar energy. Through this collaboration, Pilatus has become a shareholder in Synhelion and is helping accelerate the production and commercialisation of solar-derived aviation fuels that aim to significantly reduce life-cycle carbon emissions compared to conventional fossil jet fuel.

Pilatus plans to integrate these fuels into its own operations and, eventually, offer them to its global customer base, reinforcing its role as a pioneer

PILATUS IS DEDICATED TO THE USE OF SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS AND INNOVATIVE FUEL SOLUTIONS REFLECTING THEIR COMMITMENT TOWARDS A GREENER FUTURE

in defossilising aviation. In official remarks, Pilatus CEO Markus Bucher emphasised the importance of this technology: "We are convinced of the value of solar fuel technology — these fuels are the best way to defossilize air travel as quickly as possible. We're delighted to play a pioneering role together with Synhelion and make an important contribution to sustainability in the aviation industry." This quote reflects Pilatus' long-term strategic direction and its confidence in emerging renewable fuel solutions.

Further cementing this commitment, Pilatus has also signed fuel off-take agreements tied to future solar fuel production, demonstrating its willingness to underpin the economic viability of cleaner energy pathways within the aviation ecosystem.

BEYOND OPERATIONS: PEOPLE, GOVERNANCE AND INNOVATION

Pilatus' sustainability lens extends beyond environmental metrics to encompass social responsibility and corporate governance. The company emphasises employee wellbeing through competitive benefits, career development opportunities and leadership training. Pilatus has also adopted a Supplier Code of Conduct aligned with ethical standards, reflecting its commitment to responsible business practices across the value chain.

The establishment of a Corporate Sustainability department and the rollout of its Sustainability Strategy 2.0 illustrate how Pilatus is institutionalising sustainability within governance structures and innovation frameworks. This strategy aims to foster sustainable innovation and ensure that new technologies and processes are evaluated through an environmental and social impact perspective.

SUPPORTING INNOVATION FOR FUTURE FLIGHT

Pilatus' vision of sustainability also includes exploration of emerging technologies that could pave the way for even cleaner aviation. One example, supported through collaboration with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), is "Project H2," which investigates hydrogen-powered propulsion systems for light aircraft. With zero carbon emissions at the point of use and high energy potential, hydrogen offers a promising pathway toward climate-neutral flight — and Pilatus' involvement demonstrates its commitment to future-focused sustainability research.

CONCLUSION: A HOLISTIC GREEN STRATEGY

Pilatus Aircraft is charting a comprehensive and multifaceted sustainability journey that integrates environmental stewardship, renewable energy adoption, sustainable aviation fuel development, employee welfare, ethical governance and forward-looking innovation. By aligning its corporate strategy with climate-positive actions and partnerships, Pilatus is not only reducing its own environmental footprint but also helping to steer the aviation industry toward a more sustainable future.

From solar panels on factory roofs to pioneering solar fuel collaborations, Pilatus' commitment to sustainability demonstrates that aerospace excellence and environmental responsibility can — and must — go hand in hand. BAI

PILATUS DESCRIBES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF ITS CORPORATE ETHOS THAT IS WOVEN INTO THE COMPANY'S VISION AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Gulfstream G500 and G600 Secure EASA Certification

Gulfstream Aerospace announced that the Gulfstream G500 and Gulfstream G600 have received certification for steep approach landing by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), allowing operations at even more airports worldwide.

"Our customers already benefit from the groundbreaking performance and efficiency of the G500 and G600," said Mark Burns, president, Gulfstream. "With EASA steep-approach certification now achieved, we're proud to offer European operators even greater fleet flexibility by giving them access to more remote airports and destinations around the world."

The G500 and G600 received Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) steep-approach certification in 2023 and 2024, respectively. To earn the FAA and EASA certifications, both aircraft successfully demonstrated steep-approach capabilities with low-speed handling and short-field landings at London City Airport in England and Lugano Airport in Switzerland. BAI

Cessna Citation Ascend Enters Into Service

The Cessna Citation Ascend achieved a major milestone as the first retail customer took delivery of the midsize business jet on December 30, 2025, marking the aircraft's entry into service. Announced in 2023 the aircraft boasts an entirely new cockpit, improved performance and a luxurious flat floor cabin. The Citation Ascend received type certification from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in November 2025.

Pilots benefit from reduced workload and enhanced flight-envelope protection, while passengers enjoy a spacious flat floor cabin. The aircraft can accommodate up to 12 passengers and features an advanced acoustic treatment system for a quiet, comfortable environment similar to that of driving a car down the highway.

With all-new, nearly 15 per cent larger cabin windows, customisable interior options and wireless control of lighting, temperature, window shades and entertainment, the Ascend delivers a new level of comfort and flexibility. To keep customers connected, the aircraft includes standard GoGo US Avance L3 Max Wi-Fi; customers can also select optional US Avance L5 Wi-Fi or Gogo Galileo HDX connectivity solutions. BAI

Saudi Arabia's GACA Advances Electric Air Taxi Deployment

Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) announced the signing of an agreement with Archer Aviation under which the parties will collaborate to accelerate the deployment of electric air taxis across the Kingdom.

Under this collaboration, GACA and Archer plan to work to establish a regulatory pathway for the introduction and scale-up of eVTOL air taxi operations in the Kingdom. This framework is planned to align with the FAA's certification rule set, ensuring global interoperability, safety and operational consistency. GACA is also planning to model its regulatory pathway around the eVTOL Implementation Pilot Programme (eIPP) in the US. This approach will seek to enable early route testing and service introduction in Riyadh, Jeddah and key giga projects such as Red Sea Global.

The agreement forms part of GACA's ongoing efforts to accelerate the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) ecosystem in line with the AAM Roadmap and the objectives of the aviation programme under the National Transport and Logistics Strategy (NTLS), representing another step in the Kingdom's broader programme to develop next-generation air transport solutions. GACA and Archer also plan to undertake a series of proof-of-concept demonstrations and experimental flights to validate regulatory approaches, support infrastructure development, and strengthen public excitement for electric air taxi services. BAI

Eve Air Mobility Completes Successful First Flight of Full-Scale eVTOL Prototype

Eve Air Mobility (Eve) completed the first flight of its uncrewed full-scale eVTOL prototype at Embraer's test facility in Gavião Peixoto, state of São Paulo.

The inaugural flight initiates Eve's flight test phase and confirms the integration of key systems, including the fifth-generation fly-by-wire concept and the fixed-pitch lifter rotors. The company will perform multiple flights following today's hover flight, gradually expanding the envelope to transition into full wing borne flights throughout 2026.

Eve will manufacture six conforming prototypes to conduct the flight test campaign, aiming for certification. The Company continues to engage with Brazil's Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC), Eve's eVTOL primary certifying authority, to advance the certification process. Looking ahead, Eve expects type certification, first deliveries and entry into service in 2027.

Next steps for the programme include progressive envelope expansion and transitions to wing borne flight, as well as continued engagement with ANAC, other regulators and validating authorities, including FAA and EASA. BAI

PHOTOGRAPHS: Gulfstream, Textron Aviation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