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Tapping the Top Talent: XJet's Middle East Expansion Is to Be Guided by Al Naqbi

The seven-star service company XJet World will expand in the Middle East under the direction of Ali Al Naqbi, founding chairman of the Middle East Business Aviation Association and Presidential Flight vp.



Ali Al Naqbi.

Al Naqbi has invested in XJet and is now a member of its global board of directors.

"I was so impressed with what I saw at XJet's facility at Centennial Airport, Colorado," Al Naqbi said here yesterday. "I knew immediately that Al Bateen is the perfect opportunity to launch XJet in the Middle East/North Africa region."

Al Bateen will become the Middle East's first business-aircraft-only airport when the Abu Dhabi military leaves the base in about six months. The Abu Dhabi Airports Company is investing more than \$54.5 million in additional facilities at the airport, which is located just five km southwest of the Abu Dhabi business district.

Al Naqbi said the paperwork has been submitted for Al Bateen to be designated a Free Zone, which will help its development. He expects up to 70 business jets to be based there eventually.

Business aviation activity in the Middle East is down 10-20% from its peaks, he noted, but recently has been staging a recovery. "There is a lot of interest in buying business aircraft," he said.

Al Naqbi estimated there are now about 500 business aircraft in the Middle East region.