



Kadri Muhiddin

# Partial to Pilatus



An accomplished aviation expert with nearly 40 years' experience – and chairman of a number of aviation ventures – Kadri Muhiddin is no stranger to the effectiveness and efficiency of private aviation as a business tool, as **Jason Zappa Janse** reports.

With his work experience heritage in the Middle East, Muhiddin is currently CEO of Basel, Switzerland-based AMAC Aerospace – a completions and refurbishment company and Pilatus PC-12 NG sales representative. The company's facility at Atatürk Airport in Istanbul, Turkey, provides 1,500 square metres of hangarage, capable of housing up to four PC-12s.

As satisfied as the company is with the Swiss-built turboprop, so is Muhiddin, who owns a PC-12 himself and flies it between 500 and 1,000 hours a year.

"I had a small Piper aircraft," he says, "but the need for an actual business aircraft arose because I needed to travel further and faster than the Piper could take me. The PC-12 was the perfect solution. And it's very flexible," he adds. "It can be converted readily from a nine-passenger aircraft to a one-tonne-payload cargo aircraft."

Since Muhiddin's business requires him to travel throughout Europe, the PC-12 with its 1,750-nm range is extremely useful. "It gives you what a jet can," he says, "and it's different to other aircraft in its class thanks to that flexibility. It can use short runways for takeoffs and landings, it can land on gravel and on grass, and it can depart in icy conditions. It can take you practically anywhere you want!"

### Freedom of choice

Opting for a business aircraft rather than flying commercial is a matter of range and cost-efficiency versus time and other limitations. "Whether it's a PC-12 or any other business aircraft, the difference between flying commercial and business – when you can – is that with commercial flights you have to suit your time to the airline's schedule, while with a business aircraft you tailor your own flight plan – the day, the time, the destination – without any restriction," says Muhiddin. "Call it independence of choice."

Muhiddin opts to fly on the airlines mostly when it involves destinations beyond the range of his PC-12. "A Falcon 7X or a G550 is able to take you from the UK to Qatar or Dubai, but we're talking about a \$50-million aircraft," he explains. "It becomes counterproductive to take a small business aircraft, like a PC-12, a Cessna or a Learjet, as you need to stop for fuel. You lose the advantage of cost-efficiency, so flying

commercial becomes an option. This is where you have to set limits and choose, in order to avoid pushing an aircraft like the PC-12 outside its envelope."

Eighty to ninety per cent of his business needs are covered by the PC-12. The other 10% is simply a matter of range limitation – a consideration that goes hand in hand with the aircraft's cost-efficiency.

Muhiddin explains that he owns a PC-12 for the same reasons that his company owns one. "If I need to go to a meeting with three other managers, and I make a one-hour flight in an airplane whose fuel/time cost is \$200 per hour, you can see why choosing private over commercial is the right way to go. You fly any time you want, you eat the food you like, and take as much weight with you as you wish without significant restrictions." He continues: "With a commercial flight, you need to be at the airport two hours in advance to go through security, clear customs and immigration – the whole nine yards."

In other words, for a commercial flight lasting one hour – with two hours of waiting and going through security, plus the time spent taxiing, and then getting your luggage and leaving the airport – you've spent four hours on the trip alone, without even having started your meeting.

"With the PC-12," says Muhiddin, "you hop on, hop off, have your meeting – and you can be back in the office within the time it takes a commercial flight to take you to your destination. In this case, there's no point raising the question of whether to choose commercial or private – it's a done deal," he adds enthusiastically.

### On a side-note: Public opinion vs. business aviation

Public opinion sees business aviation predominantly as a means of transportation for the wealthy – nothing more. "Well," says Muhiddin, "if the public is not aware of the business requirements of a company that has facilities and offices in different geographical locations, then using a private aircraft to conduct business may seem extravagant. But if that business aircraft enables you to seal a deal that sustains your company's growth – and pays Mr John Public's salary – then that extravagance becomes productive efficiency. As long as you make the strict distinction between using a private aircraft for means that fulfil your business requirements on the one hand and using it for leisure on the other hand, then the use of that aircraft becomes highly productive and efficient, and you are indeed talking about business aviation." ■