

SINGAPORE-BASED FLYING DOCTORS ASIA NOW HAS THE LARGEST AIR AMBULANCE FLEET IN ASIA

Flying Doctors Asia (FDA), a fully-owned subsidiary of jet charter company Executive Jets Asia Inc (EJA), has just added a second Gulfstream Westwind 2 aircraft to its fleet, bringing the total number of its planes to three.

This makes FDA the largest all-jet air ambulance provider in Asia. The other aircraft in its fleet are the Westwind 1 and a Cessna Citation 500.

The two Westwinds are based in Singapore, while the Citation 500 is based in Manila, the Philippines.

FDA's fleet size will increase again in December, when a Hawker 700 jet aircraft and another Westwind 2 aircraft will go into service. The Hawker 700 is larger than the others, has a full stand-up cabin and more space on board. It, too, will be based in Singapore and will be reconfigured into a VIP air ambulance and also be available for corporate flights.

CEO and co-founder of FDA and EJA, Mr Prithpal Singh, noted: "With more aircraft and an all-jet fleet which can fly non-stop for five to six hours, FDA is in a strong position to more than meet our customers' increasing expectations for bigger, more comfortable, longer range aircraft, and the security and reliability of back-up aircraft in the region which can be deployed within three hours.

"Another major plus is that we offer multiple flight crews. This allows the evacuation of patients without the need for rest stops for crew during longer flights.

"For example, no stop-overs for rest will be needed for flights to China, the Maldives, Dubai and Europe, as our planes will have two sets of crew on board.

"When time allows, we even position fresh crew at the next refuelling point, which reduces changeover time to a minimum. No one else offers this capability and flexibility."

The importance of jets as air ambulances has taken off in a big way over the last few years, as a result of the growth of travel and tourism, and the increasing realisation by many regional capitals of the importance of medical hubs.

More and more travellers too are now properly insured. As a result, in the event of any mishap, injury or sickness while they are away from home, they can and are often evacuated from wherever they are by air ambulances to the nearest internationally accredited hospital.

More often than not, critically sick clients and accident cases in the region choose to be taken to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok.

However, FDA notes that due to the economic crisis, a growing number of patients are also being evacuated to secondary cities with internationally accredited hospitals - Penang, Malacca, and Manila – as these offer medical services at a lower cost.

FDA provides ICU and emergency-trained doctors and nurses who accompany the patient throughout from the time he is picked up from his hospital, during his flight and right up to the point when he is admitted into a hospital at his destination.

Indeed, we start working to save lives from the moment you call.

Executive Jets Asia and now Flying Doctors Asia has carried out more than 1,000 evacuations in the last five years.

Most of FDA's clients are hospitals, medical assistance companies, insurance companies, doctors and clinics.

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