Emirates' A380 fleet to undergo wing crack inspections

Emergency checks to begin this week on 15 of airline's superjumbos

AVIATION
SHWETA JAIN

Airbus A380 aircraft operated by Emirates airline and Qantas are to undergo urgent inspections by the European aircraft manufacturer after cracks were discovered in key wing structures.

The EU Aviation Safety Agency has issued an emergency airworthiness directive, ordering inspections of 16 superjumbo aircraft in total, 15 of which are operated by Emirates.

The aviation safety agency said cracks found on certain aircraft could reduce the structural strength of the wing if left undetected.

For Emirates, the inspections will commence "within the next 48 hours", an airline representative told *The National* on Tuesday. Any work required will be "carried out before releasing aircraft to service".

"Emirates will comply and carry out the inspections required in accordance with the airworthiness directive. We remain in close contact with Airbus and the relevant authorities to minimise any disruption to the operating schedule," the Emirates representative said.

The Dubai-based airline operates the largest A380 fleet in the world, with 116 superjumbos in its fleet, which is more than half of all active A380 jets flying today.

While five A380s are required to undergo immediate inspections, the remaining 11 will be checked within 25 flight cycles, with repairs directed by Airbus, according to the Easa. Results must be reported within seven days with likely further actions to follow, it said.

An Airbus representative told *The National* that "depending on the inspection results, Airbus will assess with Easa whether repairs are necessary or if the aircraft can return to commercial service".

"Following the December 2025 airworthiness directive, mandating inspections on the mid spars, specific findings prompted Airbus to inform Easa and to recommend inspections on a sub-population of A380s," the representative said.

He added that all aircraft with similar histories were identified. "There are five aircraft. Airbus is supporting the inspection of these five aircraft."

The A380 has faced wing-related issues in the past, prompting regulators to mandate inspections in 2012 and again in later years as aircraft aged and accumulated flight hours.

The latest directive focuses on wing mid spars – the primary structural beams of an aircraft wing, running lengthwise from the fuselage to the wingtip – a different area from some of the wing structures targeted in previous inspections.

The latest problem is "not a safety issue", according to Saj Ahmad, chief analyst at Strategic Aero Research.

"These aren't the first cracks the A380 wings have suffered in service. But it's evident the capital outlay on maintaining the ageing A380 fleet is money that could be better spent elsewhere," he told *The National*.

"However, this is a problem that needs fixing while their service life still has capability."

In May, Emirates debuted its first retrofitted two-class A380 with a Premium Economy cabin.

The airline began introducing its refurbished A380s in 2023, featuring four cabin classes including first class, with refreshed interiors and premium economy cabins on the aircraft deployed on Dubai to London Heathrow route.

It was part of the airline's multibillion-dollar retrofit programme, the largest of its kind in aviation history. By the end of the year, 15 of the airline's two-class A380 aircraft are expected to undergo the conversion.

Emirates was the backbone of the A380 programme, keeping the superjumbo in production for years. Airbus officially ended production in 2021. Emirates also took delivery of the final A380 ever produced.

An Emirates Airbus A380-800 at the ILA Berlin Air Show 2026 in Schoenefeld, Germany, this month EPA

The latest sukuk offering is expected to be listed on Nasdaq Dubai and become available for trading on July 2 Nasdaq Dubai

Residents can invest in government treasury sukuk scheme for Dh1,000

INVESTMENT
THE NATIONAL

The UAE will be issuing Dh50 million ($13.6 million) in its inaugural sovereign retail treasury sukuk programme, which is open to all residents and is aimed at encouraging financial responsibility.

The minimum investment in the government-backed, Sharia-compliant scheme is Dh1,000, with an annual profit rate of 4.3 per cent over a two-year term, the Ministry of Finance said on Tuesday.

The subscription period opened yesterday and will run until next Tuesday. The bonds are expected to be listed on Nasdaq Dubai and become available for trading on July 2, after the offering process is completed, the ministry said.

The programme builds on government efforts to encourage investment from Emiratis and foreign residents. Previously, only institutional investors were allowed to invest in government bonds. This is distinct from the fractional T-sukuk and bonds initiative launched in November, in terms of the investment procedure and the source of the securities.

The previous programme allowed investors to purchase fractional interests in existing sukuk traded at prevailing market prices, with a minimum investment of Dh4,000.

The new retail T-sukuk provide investors with direct access to newly issued sovereign bonds through a primary market subscription at par value, or 100 per cent.

Investors can buy shares online through the Dubai Financial Market's subscription platform and its app iVestor, as well as Emirates Islamic Bank, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Ajman Bank, Mashreq and Emirates NBD, the programme's lead receiving bank.

The offering is a "milestone in bolstering the readiness of the UAE's sovereign investment ecosystem by providing structured, fully digital subscription channels", said Mohamed Al Hussaini, Minister of State for Financial Affairs.

It will "enable individual investors to access government investment products efficiently and transparently through approved platforms", he added.

"Enabling subscriptions through approved digital platforms and designated banking channels simplifies participation for individual investors and provides a clear pathway to access sovereign sukuk offered within a transparent investment framework."

The sovereign retail T-sukuk programme forms part of the ministry's broader efforts to expand participation in government-backed investment instruments that are accessible to a wider segment of the UAE population.

> The programme builds on efforts to encourage investment from Emiratis and foreign residents

It supports greater public participation in the country's financial and investment ecosystem while promoting a culture of long-term saving and investment, the ministry said.

The scheme also enables investors to diversify their portfolios through a trusted, government-backed instrument within a structured framework that extends from subscription through listing and secondary-market trading.

The offering was announced after a meeting of the Investment Affairs Council on Monday, led by Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed, Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi and National Security Adviser. During the gathering, the council, which operates under the Supreme Council for Financial and Economic Affairs, reviewed the first-quarter performance of the emirate's largest sovereign funds.

Dubai's greenfield FDI strength draws $8.82bn and creates nearly 39,000 jobs

ECONOMY
ALVIN R CABRAL

Dubai welcomed Dh32.4 billion ($8.82 billion) of greenfield foreign direct investment and created nearly 39,000 jobs last year, reinforcing the effectiveness of its economic diversification strategy.

The emirate attracted 1,253 projects, up 10.5 per cent from the previous, accounting for 7 per cent of global greenfield FDI projects, the Dubai government media office said on Tuesday, using data from the *Financial Times*' FDI Markets database.

That helped Dubai gain a record share in the global market and remain the top destination for such inflows for a fifth straight year.

Greenfield FDI involves a company establishing operations in another country by building new structures. The number of projects surpassed the 1,117 recorded in 2024, although that year's value was higher at Dh52.3 billion, which was up by a third from 2023.

Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, noted that the index also ranked Dubai first in key sectors including manufacturing and artificial intelligence.

"These achievements reflect Dubai's clear vision, competitive business environment and growing global appeal as a leading destination to live, work and invest," he said.

The latest data comes as Dubai continues to diversify its economy with programmes designed to attract overseas companies to set up shop in the emirate and contribute to the wider UAE.

The emirate aims to double the size of its economy to Dh32 trillion over the next decade and establish itself among the top three global cities as part of its D33 strategy.

Dubai has attracted nearly Dh427 billion in FDI inflows since 2015, with about 57 per cent earmarked for medium and high technology sectors, according to the government's Dubai FDI Monitor.

The government has also extended more opportunities for entrepreneurship. Earlier this month, it unveiled SME in a Box, a new programme aimed at helping small and medium companies start faster and in a more cost-effective manner.

On a broader scale, the UAE was listed as the world's fifth most competitive nation in a report by the International Institute for Management Development, coming in first globally for economic performance, bureaucracy, adaptability of government policy, employment, international experience, national culture and quality of air transport.