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Title : More in Asia taking up private jet lifestyle
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SINGAPORE: More people in Asia, particularly Singapore, are adopting the private jet lifestyle.

WingsOverAsia, a social network of private aviators has seen membership grown to over 1000, since it was established two years ago.

Whether it's for a humanitarian mission, or just a holiday, more in Singapore are flying on private planes to their destinations - typically in Asia, from Singapore's Seletar Airport.

And most of them do not own a plane - just a paid membership with WingsOverAsia.

Joseph Gotuaco, chief financial officer of WingsOverAsia, said: "WingsOverAsia in many ways is about lowering the barriers to having the private pilot experience. We are trying to make it easier for you to fly, we are trying to make it cheaper for you to fly."

WingsOverAsia has three planes and looks after 16 other planes owned by its members based in Singapore, some of whom are CEOs.

The organisation offers a scheme where those without planes can get the opportunity to fly another member's plane - for as low as S\$480 per hour.

Members can also go on flying tours.

WingsOverAsia, with its network of aviators from around the region, has the expertise to settle all the administrative and logistics involved when flying across borders.

Ng Yeow Meng, managing director of WingsOverAsia, said: "What we do is that we plan the itinerary, but they actually form their own groups within the members to go on tour. It varies because a short trip... a weekend getaway to maybe Phuket or somewhere in Malaysia, could be a few hundred dollars (and) does not cost much."

But private aviation in Singapore hasn't quite taken off in a big way.

That could be due to infrastructural constraints, like the lack of parking spaces at Seletar Airport.

"In Singapore, we have our infrastructure constraints, I guess the government has many other priorities as far as devoting land... and human resources to support private aviation, but what we try to do is to understand those constraints, and kind of balance it with requirements and we work closely with authorities," said Ng.

The organisation recently held its annual networking dinner with aviators around the region, for the first time in Singapore.

- CNA/cc