

SIGHTSEEING IN ULTRALIGHT AIRPLANES IN PYONGYANG

PYONGYANG: Until a few months ago, if you wanted a bird's eye view of North Korea's capital, there was basically only one option: a 150-meter-tall tower across the river from Kim Il Sung Square. Now, if you have the cash, you can climb into the back seat of an ultralight aircraft. With the support of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who has vowed to give North Koreans more modern and "cultured" ways to spend their leisure time, and with foreign tourism companies looking to entice visitors with unique things to do besides visit war museums and political monuments, a Pyongyang flying club has started offering short flights over some of the capital's major sights.

The tours, which began in late July, are operated by the Mirim flying club out of a fancy new facility on an old airfield adjacent to another of Kim's signature modernization projects: a sprawling equestrian club and horse racetrack. Officials say more than 4,000 North Koreans have gone up in the ultralight

fleet since, along with "hundreds of foreigners" from 12 countries.

The flights go directly over some of Pyongyang's most iconic spots, including the gargantuan May Day stadium, the torch-tipped Juche Tower and Kim Il Sung Square area, and the Munsu Water Park, yet another of Kim's leisure spot "gifts" to the city. Flights start off over a typically rural setting, with a mixture of farmland and small hamlets.

But that quickly transforms into what one would expect from a city of about 2.5 million: block after block of densely concentrated high-rise residential buildings, some in the drab gray color of concrete but many painted over in pink, beige or blue pastels. Toward the center of the city, spaces open up once again with large public plazas and the parks that surround Pyongyang's many monuments to its leaders and war memorials.

A different perspective
Considerations of places best not subjected to flyovers were almost cer-

tainly a factor before the tours could get off the ground. And, just to be safe, photographs taken from the air are screened by club officials after each flight. But seeing the city from a height of 2,000 meters or less while slowly pattering through the skies provides quite a different perspective from anything tourists, and even most Pyongyang residents, had ever been able to get before.

The flights aren't cheap - a 25-minute ultralight ride from the airstrip on the outskirts of the city to Kim Il Sung Square and the Juche Tower, which had previously been the best place to get an urban panorama, goes for around \$150. Shorter flights are offered at cheaper prices, starting from about \$65, but those only fly around the immediate vicinity of the flight club. Prices for North Koreans are much cheaper, though club officials wouldn't say exactly how much. Officials say the ultralight aircraft used for the flights were made in North Korea. —AP



An ultralight aircraft flies over the city of Pyongyang in North Korea. —AP



Shukri Eid, Managing Director - East Region, Cisco Middle East



Hani Nofal

CISCO AND GBM SHOWCASE THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALITY AT GITEX

DUBAI: During GITEX 2016, Cisco introduced a suite of solutions which help hotels and resorts deliver superior experiences for guests and visitors, and which generate multiple revenue streams, greater productivity and reduced costs. Cisco also called for the regional hospitality sector to invest in innovative technologies to not only remain competitive but also differentiate their services to meet unique and fast evolving guest expectations.

The hotel industry estimates that over 300 new hotels will open in the Middle East and Africa in 2017. The UAE accounts for nearly 20 percent of this development, and with Expo 2020 and its expected 25 million visitors only a few years away, Dubai alone has over 130 hotel projects in the pipeline. Major regional events such as the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar are also driving hotel expansion. In this highly competitive environment, hotels are increasingly looking to technology to stand out and differentiate their offerings.

Latest technology solutions

At GITEX 2016, Cisco and GBM, a Cisco Gold Partner, are demonstrating the power of Cisco's latest technology solutions to deliver personalized guest experiences, improved management of operations, enhanced sales and marketing approaches, and reduced costs. One of the key solutions to be demonstrated is a new guest engagement platform for the hospitality industry, developed by IPera, a Cisco Developer Partner. The innovative 'mobile app' is built on Cisco Connected Mobile Experiences (CMX) technologies and allows hotels to recognize their guests and identify where they spend most of their time, delivering targeted messages based on their location.

"Now is the time for hotels in the region to evolve their technology strategies and take advantage of the impact digitization can have on their business. To meet evolving guest expectations, it is important for hotels in the region to use mobility in a smart way to build guest loyalty and increase room revenues through customized services and content," said Shukri Eid, Managing Director - East Region, Cisco Middle East. "We are excited to showcase a unique guest engagement platform built on Cisco's CMX wireless technologies that will help hotels deliver a personal, tailored and more easily integrated guest experience at all stages of their visit."

The fast pace of development is creating challenges for both existing players and new entrants in the hospitality sector and they are looking towards technology as an enabler to remain competitive, differentiate from other competitors and build loyalty amongst customers. Technology plays a crucial role in enabling better service and stronger operations. However, hotels will have to build analytics capabilities, keep up with advances in mobility and optimize existing touch point channels in order to apply technology strategically to create differentiated customer experiences.

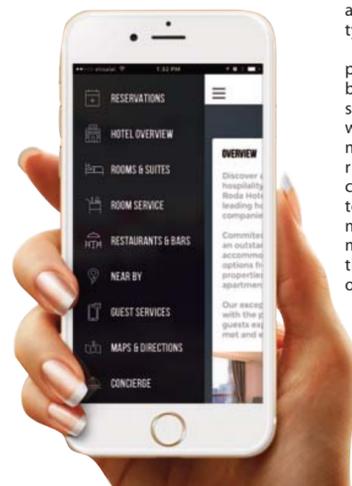
"GBM's in depth understanding of the hospitality sector, its deep technical competency around Cisco wireless and mobile technologies, and its competency in building connected applications, are assets that can help leading hospitality end users achieve their business, financial and marketing objectives," explained Hani Nofal, Vice President, Intelligent Network Solutions, Security and Mobility, GBM. "Mobility is transforming the way we travel and spend our time while away from home. Guests now expect ubiquitous connectivity for all their devices and applications, along with customized offers, content and guest services."

Unique features

Most hotel mobile apps provide information services with some guest specific applications such as bill viewing and setting alarms. What sets out the guest experience platform being showcased by Cisco and its partners is its integration capabilities with smart WLAN infrastructure to deliver seamless location-based services. This allows for a number of unique features that include locating indoor positioning and the ability to quickly recognize guests when they arrive at the hotel lobby or dining outlets. It also offers guests and visitors enhanced customer experiences such as convenient way finding across the property and mobile payment options for restaurants, retail, and other service and food and beverage outlets.

The guest engagement platform presents hotels with additional revenue opportunities through cross-venue marketing, providing greater return on investment. Connected to facility operations at the back end, the platform also allows hoteliers to enhance their customer loyalty programs and develop their digital communication strategies based on guest profiles and location, otherwise known as proximity marketing.

The platform can be scaled across other properties operating under the same brand, is built for connected devices like smartphones and tablets, and provides a wide range of touch points and engagement features and can be used at hotels, restaurants, conferences, lounges, concierge desks, and other places of customer and staff engagement. It supports multichannel integration using SMS, social media platforms, email, mobile applications, push notifications and virtual word of mouth marketing. Emergency alerts issued by the venue will also be visible to all users while on-premises. Apart from the guest engagement platform, Cisco and GBM are also showcasing their latest solutions for the region's hospitality industry. Senior executives from both companies are available at Cisco's stand number Z-B40, Zabeel Hall at GITEX Technology Week 2016 to meet with customers and partners.



FRANKFURT FAIR SHAKES UP BOOK WORLD WITH ART, TECH GADGETS

LOGICAL STEP AS CREATIVE INDUSTRIES BECOME MORE CONNECTED

FRANKFURT: There will still be more books than you could ever read, but visitors to this week's Frankfurt Book Fair will also be invited to don virtual reality goggles, visit an interactive classroom and discover 3D-printed art as publishers plug into new technology. Organizers of the world's largest publishing event say the focus on art and technology is a logical next step as the creative industries become ever more connected. The fair, which opens on Wednesday and is expected to draw some 275,000 visitors, has always been about "content-regardless of its format", the event's vice-president Holger Volland told AFP.

Among the main draws at the five-day gathering will be virtual reality experiences, with several exhibitors unveiling projects that plunge visitors into a world that until then only existed on the page. Taiwanese artist Jimmy Liao's picture book, "All of My World Is You", will come to life once visitors slip on a VR headset that will allow them to interact with the main character, a mysterious young girl, and complete challenges to make her smile.

In the spotlight as guest of honor is the literary culture and language of Flanders and the Netherlands, who have created three separate VR experiences, including one allowing users to alternate between the perspectives of a father and his nine-year-old daughter who are mourning the loss of a family member. "Literature exists not just on the page," said Suzanne Meeuwissen of the Dutch Foundation for Literature, a co-initiator of the projects, pointing to recent Nobel Literature Prize winner Bob Dylan as an example.

Virtual reality is a brand new canvas, she said, and "writers

and artists are hungry to explore this unfamiliar territory". Educational publishers are also tapping into new technology, from text books that can be made interactive with the help of an app to 3D printouts of organs to use in biology lessons. In the "Classroom of the Future", visitors can watch students and teachers try out the latest innovations. It remains to be seen, of

the challenges and opportunities of working with digital technology and show off some results. Volland described Arts+ as a place to "discuss new business models and synergies between art and technology".

One of the highlights will be a project called "The next Rembrandt" in which a Dutch team used artificial intelligence and a 3D printer to create a

British contemporary artist David Hockney, who will unveil an oversized, 500-page book illustrating his life's work, from the famous sun-soaked swimming pool paintings of the 1960s to his recent series of iPad drawings. The signed, limited edition tome is so large that it will come with its own stand and a price tag of 2,000 Euros (\$2,200).



FRANKFURT: This file photo taken on October 09, 2013 shows fairgoers visiting the Frankfurt Book Fair. —AFP

course, to what extent all these ideas can generate revenues for publishers and creators, a question that will be a hot topic in Frankfurt.

'Next Rembrandt'

Such is the focus on creative content across different media that there will even be a "fair within a fair" this year, called Arts+, where artists, architects and museums will talk about

"new" work by the master painter based on a computer algorithm that worked out the average features of a typical Rembrandt subject.

But at its heart, the Frankfurt fair is for book lovers and with over 7,000 exhibitors from more than 100 countries, visitors will get the chance to discover thousands of new titles in all imaginable genres. One of the biggest names to attend will be

Adding a touch of royal flair to this year's event will be Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Belgium's King Philippe and Queen Mathilde, who will open the Dutch-Flemish pavilion on Tuesday, on the eve of the official kick-off. The Frankfurt fair dates back over 500 years, with the first edition taking place shortly after the Gutenberg printing press was invented in nearby Mainz. —AFP

KASPERSKY LAB AT GITEX: CYBER THREATS THAT AFFECT EVERYONE

DUBAI: At GITEX Technology Week 2016, Kaspersky Lab presented an overview of the changing cyber threat landscape in the Middle East with special emphasis on the protection of critical infrastructures and smart cities.

According to Kaspersky Security Network, an average of 17.4% users in the Middle East encountered cyber threats originating from the Internet in the third quarter of 2016. The countries with the highest percentage of users affected by these threats were Qatar (24.4%), United Arab Emirates (22.8%), Kuwait (20.1%), Saudi Arabia (17.9%) and Egypt (17.1%). At the same time, an average of 47% of users in the region encountered malware that spread in local networks, via USBs and storage disks.

"Raising awareness about cyber threats is fundamental for smart environments. Rapid technological advances in recent years require threat intelligence research and a strategic collaboration between critical infrastructure and smart cities. A cyber incident can have a major impact on the economical, reputational and productivity aspects of an organization, it can also threaten human lives. Consequently, we have been making a lot of efforts at Kaspersky Lab towards securing the different components of smart cities, contributing our expertise within the Securing Smart Cities not-for-profit global initiative, and that's predominantly why we are highlighting these issues this week at GITEX," said



Mohammad Amin Hasbini

Mohammad Amin Hasbini, Senior Security Researcher, Global Research & Analysis Team, Kaspersky Lab.

The concept of a smart city involves bringing together various cutting-edge technolo-

gies and solutions to ensure the reliable and convenient provision of services to people, public safety, resources utilization, etc. However, these technologies also open the doors for serious cyber risks that must be addressed proactively. Smart city security should be top priority for the executives pioneering the smart city evolution.

"Our recent study investigated city kiosks as well as speed cameras and their supporting infrastructure. Our experts discovered that cybercriminals could easily compromise these cameras and manipulate the data collected. To prevent such situations in real life, there should be a comprehensive approach to the development and implementation of smart devices into a city's infrastructure," comments Hasbini.

In addition to sharing its expertise, Kaspersky Lab provides a range of solutions that cover major smart city elements, including smart terminals, mobile applications, data storage and security for commercial and industrial facilities. The company's portfolio of security solutions that can help in developing smart cities includes:

- Kaspersky Security Intelligence Services
- Kaspersky Industrial CyberSecurity
- Kaspersky Security for Data Centers
- Kaspersky Embedded Systems Security for ATMs and Point-of-Sale Terminals
- Kaspersky Mobile Security
- Kaspersky Anti-Targeted Attack Platform