

Will civil supersonic aircraft return?

Boom Supersonic Company (USA) aims to put supersonic aircraft into operation before the end of this decade, carrying about 64 - 80 passengers and flying at a speed of about 2,100 km/h

The XB-1 aircraft, manufactured by Boom Supersonic Company (headquartered in Colorado - USA), has just completed its first test flight, thereby marking an important milestone on the aircraft's return path. passenger supersonic.

According to Boom Supersonic, the above flight took place at the Mojave Air and Space Port in California - USA in early March 2024.

The XB-1 project was initiated in 2014 with the hope of paving the way for the design and development of the company's Overture commercial aircraft. In an interview with CNN on March 30, Mr. Blake Scholl, CEO of Boom Supersonic, said the next few months will be very exciting after the initial success of the 10-year journey of supersonic aircraft research.

The first flight of the XB-1 achieved all testing goals, including safely reaching an altitude of 2,170 m and a speed of up to 439 km/h. This altitude is lower than that of commercial aircraft and the speed is also much lower than the speed of sound of 1,234.8 km/h.

However, according to Mr. Scholl, the plan for the XB-1 to achieve its supersonic ambitions will be implemented quickly. "We will conduct a series of flights - from 10 to 15 flights - over the next 5-7 months to overcome the sound barrier for the first time" - Mr. Scholl said.



The XB-1 aircraft has its first test flight in early March 2024. Photo: BOOM SUPERSONIC

The world previously only had two civil supersonic aircraft: the Soviet Tupolev Tu-144 and the Anglo-French Concorde, of which the Concorde last flew in October 2003. Now, the aviation industry is bustling with hypersonic projects, such as the X-59 aircraft from Lockheed Martin and the US Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

According to Mr. Scholl, the explosion of digital technology is contributing to the return of civil supersonic aircraft. Previously, Concorde's development required the vehicle to be tested in a wind tunnel - a costly and time-consuming process.

Meanwhile, Boom Supersonic tested its design using a "digital wind tunnel" that costs much less than a real wind tunnel.

The XB-1 also has the advantage of being made entirely of carbon fiber composites, chosen for their durability and lightness. Landing is done through a system of cameras and assistive displays called augmented reality vision systems, helping pilots land more easily than with their predecessors, supersonic aircraft.

It is also powered by a jet engine using 100% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) as the aviation industry moves towards a net zero emissions target by 2050.

According to CNN, Mr. Scholl believes that supersonic passenger aircraft will eventually return. In addition, he is also steadfast in his dream that this vehicle will help people reach anywhere in the world within 4 hours for only 100 USD.

In the short term, the company aims to put the first aircraft (called Overture) into operation before the end of this decade, carrying about 64 - 80 passengers and flying at a speed of about 2,100 km/h.

The company also said it has received orders and pre-orders from a number of airlines, including American Airlines, United Airlines (all from the US) and Japan Airlines (Japan).

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