



REPORT: IRAN BUYS 13 BOEING 737 JETS

News / Airlines



Iranian airlines have bought 13 narrow-body Boeing 737 aircraft in their latest move to rebuild the country's commercial fleet, a news agency says.

Two of the used aircraft, of the vintage 737-400 model, will fly in from a European country on Monday night, Fars quoted an informed source as saying Sunday without disclosing any names.

The two aircraft are the first of eight Boeing 737s bought by Nasim Air, a new airline based in the central city of Isfahan, the unnamed official said.

Caspian Airlines has purchased three other and Aseman Airlines another two of the 150-seat short- to medium-range jets.

Meanwhile, a UK-built Avro RJ short-haul airliner, bought by Mahan Air, flew into Iran on Friday, the source added.

According to Fars, the aircraft are aged above 15 but the official said it was a non-issue.

"The main issue about an aircraft is being able to procure parts. It doesn't matter much how old a

plane is. What is essential is to have the manufacturing company ensure parts supply," the official said.

Iran's purchase of eight second-hand Airbus A340s and one Airbus A321 in May ran into controversy after the U.S. indicated that it might try to stop the passenger planes flying international routes.

The U.S. Treasury department said Mahan Air, which had acquired the aircraft, had a "blockable interest" in the planes because the Iranian airline was blacklisted by Washington.

None of the airlines, which have bought the used Boeing 737s, are blacklisted but it is not clear yet how the U.S. will react to the trade.

U.S. sanctions ban the sale of aircraft and parts to Iran. Under an interim nuclear deal in 2013, the West eased the ban on sales of spare parts but selling planes is still prohibited.

Western sanctions are the biggest enemy of Iran's aviation which has been plagued by a series of air crashes, claiming the lives of hundreds of Iranians.

A nuclear accord reached with Tehran in July has provided Iran with a chance to renew its fleet of commercial aircraft.

Minister of Roads and Urban Development Abbas Akhundi has said that Iran would need to buy 550 commercial aircraft of various models at a cost of US\$60 billion.

Iran's civil aviation fleet consists of 248 aircraft with an average age of 19 years, 100 of which are grounded, he has said.

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