QATAR AIRWAYS TO SEEK COMPENSATION FOR DELAYS IN AIRBUS A320NEO DELIVERIES

News / Airlines

Qatar Airways will seek compensation for delays in delivery of its Airbus A320neo aircraft, chief executive Akbar Al Baker said.

Pratt & Whitney's geared turbofan-powered engines have a "long way to go," and Qatar Airways expects a "very huge" delay before receiving the A320neo, Mr Al Baker told Bloomberg Television on Tuesday during the Singapore Airshow. Though he emphasised the delay is not Airbus's fault, he said the airline will refuse to take the planes unless they meet guarantees and performance promises.

"It's an issue for Pratt, not Airbus," Mr Al Baker said. Still, he added, "it's for Airbus to resolve."

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In a separate interview Tuesday, Airbus chief Fabrice Bregier said Qatar Airways is “right” to seek compensation for the delivery delays.

The second-biggest Gulf carrier was to be the first A320neo customer but refused delivery of the planes in December, citing engine performance issues, leaving Deutsche Lufthansa as the launch customer. Mr Al Baker previously said the delays have had a large financial impact on the carrier, and emphasised how important it is to receive the planes to address a capacity shortage.

Airbus has won orders from 80 customers for more than 4,500 single-aisle A320neos since it began marketing the model in 2010. The aircraft’s entry into service has been marred by faults connected with the engines.

Airbus dropped Pratt & Whitney engines for the first test flight of the A321neo in favour of engines from CFM International.

Qatar Airways, which is pursuing a strategy of investing in successful or high-potential carriers, is in talks with Royal Air Maroc for a potential partnership. Earlier this month it signed a preliminary accord for a partnership with Italy’s Meridiana.

The Meridiana stake “should come to fruition in the not- too-distant future,” Mr Al Baker said. “And yes, we have in mind a couple of other investments.”

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