Boeing and Ariana Team Up for Airline's Renewal

Boeing [NYSE: BA] and Ariana Afghan Airlines have finalized a fleet renewal plan that includes the lease of two 757-200s from Boeing Capital Corporation, as well as the direct purchase of four Next-Generation 737-700 airplanes that the airline will receive beginning in 2009. The ceremonial signing and celebration dinner was held last night at Dubai's Park Hyatt hotel.

The agreement also includes an advanced training package for Ariana's flight and cabin crews and maintenance and engineering staff to begin training for the 757-200s that will be delivered later this month.

"It's rewarding for us to play an active role in a prudent strategy that will see Ariana's renaissance," said Lee Monson, vice president of sales for The Middle East and Africa. "These airplanes will greatly enhance Ariana's operational efficiency and reliability and we are committed to bringing all of Boeing's resources into play to assist the airline in its future growth and development."

Following several years of war and turmoil, Ariana's management has been hard at work over the past year implementing a recovery plan to reestablish the airline's proud history and record for safety, reliability and service. With the signing of the Boeing agreement, Ariana will meet its first goal to bring reliable service to its passengers in time for this year's Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

"We are pleased by Boeing having joined in our determination to put Ariana at the forefront of a long-term plan to rebuild not just the airline, but also to intensify our efforts for reconstructing Afghanistan's aviation and transportation infrastructure" said His Excellency Enayatullah Qasimi, Afghanistan's Minister of Transportation.

Both the high-performance Boeing 757 and Next-Generation 737-700 with its Blended Winglets and powerful engines bring superior performance to meet the challenges of Ariana's home base in Kabul, a high-altitude airport surrounded by mountains and experiencing seasonally warm temperatures.

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