

China's Boeing snub opens door for Indian airlines

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Dhaka: Indian carriers, which are grappling with aircraft acquisition, amid global supply chain limitations, may benefit from China's instruction to its airlines to refrain from procuring Boeing aircraft in response to US President Donald Trump's 145pc tariffs.

Chinese carriers are presently awaiting delivery of approximately 100 B737 MAX - the aircraft Air India Express and Akasa are queued for - and 11 B787 Dreamliners, which features in AI's orderbook.

"We anticipate some of these aircraft, originally destined for Chinese carriers, will be redirected to Indian customers.

The previous year or two witnessed a similar occurrence, with white tails (aircraft manufactured for specific customers but acquired by others) being allocated to AI Express and Akasa," said airline industry specialists.

AI Express acquired 25 white tail MAX last year and was scheduled to receive 25 additional aircraft.

Following the recent US-China tariff dispute, the airline might secure additional white tails or purpose-built aircraft. "The Seattle final assembly line capacity designated for Chinese carriers' MAX production will now remain unutilised.

Consequently, Indian carriers including AI Express and Akasa might receive additional aircraft, either specifically manufactured or white tails," industry sources said.

Regarding Airbus, it maintains two final assembly lines for the prominent single-aisle A320 family. China may now request Airbus to increase aircraft availability for its carriers.

Boeing's delayed aircraft deliveries have significantly impacted India's newest carrier Akasa, as it currently employs substantially more pilots than its present or anticipated near-term requirements, causing dissatisfaction among idle cockpit crew.

Both Tata group Air India Express and Akasa possess sufficient financial capability to accommodate additional aircraft, if available at present. These budget airlines incorporated white tails featuring several rows of 2x2 business seating arrangement frontward, as specified by the original customer.

They accepted available aircraft from Boeing, whose MAX production has been considerably affected following successive unfavourable developments.

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