

First production 777X takes flight

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: The first-ever production Boeing 777-9 has taken to the skies from Everett Paine Field in Washington, marking a significant milestone for the long-delayed widebody program.

According to ADS-B data from a flight tracking platform, the aircraft departed at 15:40 local time on May 7, climbing to an altitude of 39,000 feet before returning to base after a roughly three-hour flight. The bare, green-colored aircraft currently bears the tail number N20080.

N20080 is expected to join Lufthansa's fleet next year, as Boeing CEO Kelly Ortberg earlier confirmed the German national carrier to be the launch customer for the type.

Lufthansa has a firm order for 20 777-9 aircraft, though deliveries have been pushed back several years due to certification hurdles. Lufthansa Group CEO Carsten Spohr recently said the carrier will continue

operating its A340-300s if further delays occur.

However, Boeing continues progressing through the 777-9 certification process. On April 1, the manufacturer conducted maximum brake energy tests, loading the aircraft to its highest takeoff weight and accelerating to approximately 190 knots before executing a rejected takeoff with full braking applied.

Boeing noted the wheel fuse plugs melted as designed, safely venting tire pressure. "Maximum brake energy is one of the most highly choreographed tests that we do," said 777-9 test director Madison Strauss.

The 777-9 is the larger variant of the 777X program, alongside the 777-8. The variant is currently the largest in-production commercial aircraft in the world since the Airbus A380 and Boeing 747-8 manufacturing programs ended a couple of years earlier.

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