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## Iran to Display 3rd Generation of Home-Made Fighter Jet

TEHRAN (Fars News Agency)- Iran announced that it would soon test fly the third generation of its domestically-built fighter jet 'Saeqeh' (Thunderbolt).



Speaking to reporters on Thursday, executor of Saeqeh manufacturing project said that the first generation of the fighter has been built by the air force while the second generation is a joint product of the defense ministry and air force.

Hassan Parvaneh said that manufacture of the third generation of Saeqeh is underway, and added that the new type which will be tested in the near future differs from the previous generations due to major changes in its weapon system, aerodynamics and operational range.

Iran on Thursday successfully tested two more domestically-built fighter jets from its Azarakhsh (Lightning) generation and the new planes, named Saeqeh (Thunderbolt), will be displayed to the public during a military parade on National Army Day on Saturday.

The Islamic Republic celebrated the start of official flights by its home-made fighter jets during a ceremony attended by a number of officials and commanders, including the defense minister, at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport.

Saeqeh, a joint product of the Iranian air force and defense ministry, has been described as similar to the American F-18 fighter jet.

Last month, Iran showed off for the first time a new fighter jet said to be modeled on the American F-5 but built using domestic technology.

The Azarakhsh jet - one of the first home-produced military planes by Iran - made a successful flight in the central city of Isfahan in a ceremony attended by Defense Minister Mostafa Mohammad Najjar and other officials last month.

The development of the plane was first announced in September last year, when military officials said that it was "comparable" to the US F-5 fighter jet.

Following the successful flight of Azarakhsh fighter jet, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mostafa Mohammad Najjar said that Saeqeh which is the second generation of the same fighter jet would also launch official flights in the Iranian sky in the near future.

The fly-past in Isfahan appears to have been the first time the Azarakhsh jet has been shown in public.

The current US embargo means that Iran must work hard to find spare parts to keep its fleet in the air and officials have repeatedly emphasized the importance of moving towards self-sufficiency in defense.

Iran's deputy air force commander Mohammad Alavi said on Wednesday that Iran has already prepared plans to retaliate against any possible Israeli air attacks by bombing the Jewish state with "our warplanes," apparently referring to the new jet fighters.