

Qatar Airways confirms issues with A350 fuselage surfaces

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Qatar Airways (QR, Doha Hamad Int'l) has confirmed that its A350 fleet has experienced a faster than expected deterioration of surfaces covered by paint and will not take any more deliveries of the type until the issue is resolved. "Qatar Airways continues to experience and has witnessed a condition in which the surface below the paint on some of its Airbus A350 aircraft has been degrading at an accelerated rate. Qatar Airways will require this condition and its underlying root cause to be fully understood and corrected before the delivery of any further Airbus A350 aircraft," a spokesperson told Reuters news agency. The Qatari carrier also said that it had ramped up the frequency of checks of its A350s and grounded an unspecified number of already delivered aircraft. Earlier, Bloomberg reported that Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker had threatened not to take any more A350s until the then unidentified problem had been resolved. According to the ch-aviation fleets advanced module, Qatar Airways has 23 unfilled orders for A350-1000s, with at least five deliveries tentatively scheduled for 2021. The Qatari airline's current fleet includes nineteen A350-1000s, as well as thirty-four A350-900s. The manufacturer refused to comment on the report, saying that whilst it was in contact with the airline, it would keep these conversations confidential. In a separate development, Qatar Airways Group signed memoranda of understandings concerning cooperation with a number of Russian companies during the recent St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. Among others, the group said it signed MoUs with St. Petersburg airport and Volga-Dnepr Group, although it did not reveal any details as to the substance of these agreements. It also did not respond to ch-aviation's queries. The Qatari sovereign wealth fund, Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), owns a 24.99% stake in St. Petersburg Pulkovo airport which is preparing to go ahead with infrastructural upgrade works. The carrier itself has been in long-running and still inconclusive talks about the a prospective acquisition of a 25% stake in Moscow Vnukovo airport.

