

Iran test-flies homemade fighter jet

by UPI

ISFAHAN, Iran -- The test flight of Iran's second self-designed fighter jet in the central city of Isfahan was successful, local media reported. The flight of the Azarakhsh, or "Lightning," was witnessed Sunday by Defense Minister Mostafa Najjar and other senior defense and military officials, the Alalam Satellite TV network reported Monday. The aircraft is reportedly modeled on the U.S. F-5 jet, but redesigned and built entirely in Iran, officials said. The government announced news of its production last September as part of its strategy of decreasing reliance on U.S.-made replacement parts for its fleet of aircraft. Washington has an embargo on military equipment sales to Iran. The Iranian military also redesigned an F-18 fighter jet and dubbed it Saegheh, or "Thunder," which was publicly test-flown earlier this year, the report said. "At a time when the United States plans to sell arms to its allies in the region, our country's technicians take greater giant strides for national defense self-sufficiency," said Isfahan Governor-General Morteza Bakhtiari.

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