

Bhadoria stresses on Make in India, backs DRDO's indigenous fighter plane

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- *The AMCA is being developed by the DRDO for the Indian Air Force at a time when India has virtually said no to the American and Russian offers in this regard*

New Delhi: Throwing his weight behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make in India initiative, IAF Chief RKS Bhadoria on Friday said that his force would go for the indigenous AMCA plane for fifth-generation fighter aircraft (FGFA) requirements.

The Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) is being developed by the DRDO for the Indian Air Force at a time when India has virtually said no to the American and Russian offers in this regard.

"There are no plans for a foreign FGFA now or in the foreseeable future," he said. "The FGFA for the IAF will be the indigenous AMCA for which work has already started," Bhadoria said in his maiden press conference.

Asked if the Air Force could depend upon DRDO for aircraft development, the Air Force Chief retorted that he was there to fully back Make in India and no one should have any doubt on indigenous capabilities.

"Make in India will remain one of our main focus in the times to come. Will continue to induct indigenous systems to reduce dependence," he said.

On the future acquisition of 114 multirole fighters, the IAF chief said the process for getting the acceptance of necessity (AON) for the 114 fighters to be Made in India will be taken shortly.

He said the project would be done under the strategic partnership model.

Asked if there were any plans for the Air Force to buy 36 more Rafale combat aircraft, Bhadoria said he had also heard about such plans and suggested that there was nothing concrete on this issue.

Asked about the Pilates basic trainer project, he said the case has been scrapped for buying 38 more of these planes from Switzerland and the indigenous HTT-40 would be the next trainer plane for the force.

Bhadoria also revealed that due to high costs involved, the Air Force has scrapped the plan to re-engine the Jaguar deep penetration strike fighters and the IAF would now redraw its force structure plans in view of the fighter aircraft squadrons being phased out in the near future.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/bhadoria-stresses-on-make-in-india-backs-drdo-s-indigenous-fighter-plane-11570205462340.html>

Air Force Chief backs indigenous production of 5th generation jets

By Elizabeth Roche

- *The Chinook and Apache choppers may make an appearance at the Air Force Day show at Hindon station on 8 Oct*
- *The AMCA is currently in 'detail design phase' and is expected to be completed by 2021*

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to get a major makeover with the addition of French Rafale fighter jets, 83 indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, and 114 new medium range multi-role aircraft to its fleet in the coming years.

US-built heavy lift Chinook and the advanced multi-role Apache attack helicopters have already been added to the IAF fleet, and are expected to make their debut at the Air Force Day show at the Hindon Air Force Station on Tuesday. In addition, the IAF is set to take delivery of the first batch of the S-400 Russian air defence systems between 2020 and 2024.

As for a fifth generation stealth fighter aircraft, IAF chief Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria said on Friday that India had no plans for imports right now and would be looking at the indigenous advanced medium combat aircraft (AMCA) to meet that requirement.

"For the fifth generation, the Indian programme AMCA has already been initiated. That has been given the go-ahead. We have been given full support. That programme is taking off. That is where we are putting our energies in," Bhadauria said. There are "no plans" to import "as yet" and "not for the foreseeable future", Bhadauria told reporters in New Delhi ahead of the 87th raising day of the IAF on 8 October.

The AMCA is currently in "detail design phase" and is expected to be completed by 2021, according to news reports. It is to be built with a yet-to-be selected strategic partner—a foreign equipment manufacturer that will make 114 fighter jets under the strategic partnership model.

The new acquisitions and inductions at the IAF come against the backdrop of heightened tensions with Pakistan and China, which has been rapidly modernizing its military.

Asked about India's preparedness to fight a two-front war with the IAF's strength falling to 30-odd squadrons against a projected strength of 42, Bhadauria said: "Our plan for building up, you are already aware (of) 83 LCAs are already ordered, we should be signing the contract very soon, 114 medium multi-role combat aircraft (MMRCA), 36 Rafale have already joined in, we are going to go in for 21 Mig-29s, so this is the current plan."

Other steps to maintain fleet readiness include mid-life upgradation of the Mirage-2000, MiG-29 and Jaguar, which was "already under way", the IAF chief said. "The MiG-29 upgrade programme is progressing. The Su-30 MKI aircraft are also planned to be upgraded further enhancing its operational capability," he added.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/air-force-chief-backs-indigenous-production-of-5th-generation-jets-11570208233617.html>