

Rafale engine manufacturer Safran offers to help India develop first indigenous aircraft engine

By Samir Shukla A proposal was sent to the DRDO about this, Olivier Andries, the CEO of the Safran Aircraft Engines, said on Wednesday while giving a brief to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the company's military and civil projects in India

By Chitranjan Kumar

New Delhi: French aerospace company Safran, that manufactures engines for Rafale fighter jets, has expressed its willingness to help India develop its first indigenous fighter aircraft engine.

A proposal was sent to the Defence and Development Research Organisation (DRDO) about this, Safran CEO Olivier Andries said on Wednesday while briefing Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the company's military and civil projects in India.

"They are studying the proposal sent by us. We are willing to transfer the technology and this could be the way forward for the first indigenous fighter aircraft engine," Andries told India Today TV. The Mirage fighter jets use M53 variant of the engine.

"It will be a big boost for 'Make in India' if the proposal works out. It means India would be able to sell the engine to any country that uses Rafale," said an Indian official.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited the Safran facility in Villaroche near Paris a day after receiving the first Rafale jet for the Indian Air Force. There he was given a presentation and did a tour of the facility on Indian interests.

Sources said studies have also been done for the possibility of manufacturing an indigenous engine for Indian made Light Combat Aircraft Tejas.

India and France expect further enhancement of their ties, especially in the arena of defence cooperation. "We will support the 'Make in India' policy. Let us look at the future. You didn't just opt for a fighter but opted for enhancement of military partnership. We will do our best to meet your requirement," French Defence Minister Florence Parly said after the induction of Rafale.

The two defence ministers met for the second defence dialogue on Tuesday evening and reviewed the status of bilateral cooperation in the field, which is a key pillar of the India-France Strategic Partnership.

"They also exchanged views on contemporary regional and international developments of mutual interest. Both sides discussed ways to further deepen defence-related official as well as operational level interactions. Both sides agreed to expand the scope and complexity of the existing regular bilateral joint exercises," a defence ministry spokesman said.

Recognising that India-France partnership in the Indian Ocean Region is crucial for preserving and promoting the common strategic and security interests, the two Ministers noted the continuing implementation of actions outlined in the "Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region" (March 2018). The Ministers also reaffirmed the strong intention of the two sides to further deepen bilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism.

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/rafale-engine-manufacture-safran-offers-to-help-india-develop-first-indigenous-aircraft-engine/story/383768.html>



While we must welcome Rafale, IITs, HAL & DRDO must be asked why we had to buy it

By Samir Shukla

I am glad the much-needed and much-delayed Rafale is here, at last, as we are known to have suicidal tendencies when it comes to defence.

Rafale is a fine aircraft, a marvel of modern engineering, but in India, we have managed to reduce it completely to a point of discussion about corruption, instead of what it actually is, i.e. symbol of The Great Achievements of the past regimes.

Rafale is a symbol, not of French engineering but failure of Indian engineering achieved through a fine process that has continued for almost seventy years and it has decided the fate of our nation in not just defence but every other sector.

While it is tempting to look at the cost of purchasing any defence equipment if you have a masochistic streak and love to find out how our poorest of poor nation enriches the world (and also funds the further research of the same nations to rob us again and again), I rather look at other set of numbers. So, if we look at numbers really connected with Rafale deal, they are not its price but are of a timeline that we keep ignoring.

We need to realise that first Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) of independent India was founded in 1951 and by 1961 we had all five major IITs, ie. Kharagpur, Bombay, Madras, Kanpur and Delhi established to serve the nation. If we look at government stakeholders, we had our own Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in 1958 and though Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) was founded in 1940 as a private venture, it too came to the government fold after independence.

So, it is clear that, atleast from the early sixties, we had all the ingredients in place to make a Rafale, or rather its precursor aircraft from that era that could have taken us to reach Rafale level today.

Sixty years after that, and almost fifty of these years spent under the stable regime of Gandhi family that has travelled the world and hence can't be unaware of how things are happening elsewhere, we are still paying through our nose because we are almost incapable of making even a military grade drone, forget a full fledged aircraft matching to the world standards today.

(If you are planning to fly in TEJAS, my humble request is have pity on me and don't, as we can't bear to talk of two tragedies in one piece. TEJAS, born through a caesarean after spending nearly thirty years in the womb of our Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme (which started in the 1980s) is a legend that deserves to be more in the books of bad management than in air.)

If we had all the necessary ingredients in place, ie. academies of excellence (IITs), a dedicated research organisation (DRDO), a dedicated manufacturing facility (HAL) and most importantly a government run almost autocratically by an educated elite family that claims to have founded most of these important organisations, what went wrong?

It can be our failure to build nationalist culture in our academies and hence we created engineers to export so we end up importing engineering. It can be blatant corruption driven by international mafias that led to compromising our research establishment or even the government.

And, if we can be brutally honest, it can be because we are just bad at engineering.

Frankly, I have no real answer and I hope not to find out what looks to be uncomfortable truth.

Whatever the reason, it is clear that we have messed up, and messed up so badly that now we can't ignore it any further. Rafale is a proof that IITs, DRDO and HAL have failed for whatever reason that they may have to offer, but it is clear that we need to overhaul the defence ecosystem right from the scratch.

This means that we will need to face a lot of uproar from the elites and the established that are currently demanding status quo under the garb of questioning them as an assault on democracy.

From scientists to administrators who have failed to do their jobs now are mixing issues when being questioned, but they need to understand that just as important as their right to question political failure is the right of the nation to ask them questions about their own failure in doing their own jobs.

Sixty years is a long long time, and the nation can't bear to wait any longer, especially as we have China rising next door as an existential threat.

I am perfectly aware that this piece can be looked at and will be looked at as a subtle effort to create a sense of fear to justify attacks on intellectuals by the state, but I feel that we as a nation has to face a lot or bitter truths and one of them is the extreme leftism sold as freedom.

It is used far too often to protect the elites and they have become accustomed to be impervious to questioning. The time has come to make them answer for our collective failure.

(DISCLAIMER : Views expressed above are the author's own.)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/science-nomad/while-we-must-welcome-rafale-iits-hal-drdo-must-be-asked-why-we-had-to-buy-it/>