

Will treble defence exports to \$5 bn: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 14th edition of Aero India 2023, in Bengaluru on Monday

PHOTOS: PTI

AGENCIES

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday set out ambitions to more than treble annual defence exports to \$5 billion over the next two years, as arms firms flocked to Aero India for a slice of the nation's massive import budget. "The country, which was the biggest defence importer for decades, is now exporting defence equipment to 75 countries of the world," he said.

Modi said India's defence exports have increased six times in the last five years and that it has crossed the figure of \$1.5 billion in its exports. "Our target is that by 2024-25, we will increase this export figure from 1.5 billion to 5 billion dollars," he said.

The five-day aerospace exhibition, considered the largest in Asia, is seeing the participation of over 700 Indian and foreign defence companies, besides delegates from around 100 countries, which included several defence ministers as well.

"You also know that defence is such an area in which technology, market and business are considered the most complicated...We consider this to be just a start," Modi said.

The country is looking to sign defence deals worth ₹75,000 crore (\$9 billion) at Aero India, its biggest ever, as its airlines try to complete jetliner purchases to meet civilian demand and press global aircraft manufacturers to produce more locally, mainly through partnerships.

"Today, India is not just a market for defence companies, it is also a potential defence partner," Modi said in a speech at the show. "I



Indian Air Force's Tejas aircraft displays a manoeuvre on Monday

call on India's private sector to invest more and more in the country's defence sector." India exports defence products to 75 countries, he added.

Past Indian exports include Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) Dhruv helicopters to the Philippines, Mauritius and

Ecuador, and Russia-India venture BrahMos Aerospace's supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines. HAL has also offered its Tejas light fighter jet for sale to Malaysia. India has also exported other items such as offshore patrol

vessels, coastal surveillance systems, avionics, chaff rocket launchers and spares for radars. The air show aims to promote exports of indigenous air platforms such as Tejas, Dhruv, HTT-40 training aircraft, Dornier light utility helicopter and the light combat helicopter.

India also wants smaller domestic firms and start-ups to make parts for large defence products globally, and attract foreign investment for joint product development and production.

Boeing global support centre comes to India

Boeing has launched its first Global Support Centre (GSC) in India. It also

announced a ₹200-crore investment in a new logistics centre in India. Based in Gurugram, the GSC will deliver customised operational efficiency and safety improvement projects for Boeing's airline customers, civil aviation regulatory bodies and other industry stakeholders, it said in a statement on Monday.

Rolls-Royce offers engine co-creation for medium fighter

AJAI SHUKLA

Bengaluru, 13 February

While a large number of global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) echo the Indian government's Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-sufficient India) slogans, British engine company Rolls-Royce has thrown its hat in the ring to design and develop engines for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), which will form the backbone of the IAF's fifth-generation fighter fleet starting a decade from now. "This is about co-creating the intellectual property (IP) that goes into a new fighter engine. This will be a greenfield design and will take a decade to create," says Kishore Jayaraman, who heads Rolls-Royce India.

There is little appetite amongst combat aircraft engine makers to share the IP that results from a co-creation project. The US and India had begun a project to co-develop a fighter engine under the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI), but the American firms decided against sharing IP.

Similarly, French engine maker, Safran, was unwilling to cooperate with the DRDO to co-create the Kaveri engine.

"We are keen to partner India for the co-development of combat engine technology in the country. We believe that such a partnership should result in the transfer of both know-how and know-why, with all IP for critical combat engine technology resting with India, allowing future customisation and improvisations," says Jayaraman.

Rolls-Royce, however, points out that it has been acting in accordance with the principles of Atmanirbharta for almost a century.

Jayaraman says the first delivery of mail by air, which was done from Karachi to Bombay in 1932, was flown by JRD Tata in a Puss Moth aircraft with Rolls-Royce engines. In 1936, the first squadron of the Indian Air Force (IAF) was raised, flying Westland Wapiti aircraft with Rolls-Royce

engines. In 1956, Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) began a 50-year partnership with Rolls-Royce for manufacturing the Orpheus engine. In 1981, the IAF began inducting the Jaguar deep penetration strike aircraft, which was powered by the Rolls-Royce Adour 804/811 engines.

"We have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with HAL to keep the Adour 804/811 in service for some 45 years. How many OEMs stand ready to support an engine for that long," says Jayaraman.

In the 2000s, HAL began manufacturing the Hawk trainer, while also building the Rolls-Royce Adour 871 engines that powered it. Now, he says, Rolls-Royce is ready to take the next step, which is to design and develop aero engines in partnership with Indian firms. "We want to develop intellectual property in India," he says.

Currently, some 750 Rolls-Royce engines power aircraft in service with the IAF, the Indian Navy, and HAL.

Rolls-Royce says it is also willing to co-develop marine engines for the Indian Navy, including its MT-30 turbines, which Rolls-Royce's Alex Zino describes as one of the

world's most power-dense engines. The MT-30 provides all-electric drive to both the Royal Navy's Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers. The next Indian aircraft carrier is being conceived as a 65,000 tonne vessel, similar to the Queen Elizabeth-class.

Rolls-Royce is also offering India the WR-21 turbine, which propels the Royal Navy's Type 45 Daring-class destroyers. The Indian Navy has so far built its destroyers and frigates with Russian and Ukrainian turbines, and with the General Electric LM-2500 gas turbine.

Rolls-Royce subsidiary, MTU, which has been acquired by Rolls-Royce Power Systems, might also provide its MB 838 engine for a new 35-40-tonne light tank that DRDO is developing for Indian troops in places such as Eastern Ladakh, where the Indian Army found itself confronting Chinese armour.



"WE ARE KEEN TO PARTNER INDIA FOR CO-DEVELOPMENT OF COMBAT ENGINE TECHNOLOGY IN THE COUNTRY. WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH A PARTNERSHIP SHOULD RESULT IN THE TRANSFER OF BOTH KNOW-HOW AND KNOW-WHY"

KISHORE JAYARAMAN,
President,
Rolls-Royce India



The tail of HAL's fighter aircraft, at Yelahanka airbase in Bengaluru