

VAYU Interview with

Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, Chief of the Air Staff, IAF



VAYU: *The IAF has issued a new RFI for some 110 fighters and received responses by 6 July 2018, presumably from known OEMs. These are apparently being studied and selected companies would be asked to submit formal proposals for evaluation.*

Can you kindly indicate as to how long this next step could take?

CAS: The case for 114 fighters is through the Strategic Partnership route and the process as per Chapter VII of DPP-16 will be followed.

VAYU: *The IAF is very short of 'force multipliers', such as AWACS and mid-air refuellers (MRA). Kindly give us a road map as to when this vital gap in the IAF's inventory is to be filled.*

CAS: The Flight Refuelling Aircraft (FRA) is an important combat support platform and the RFI for six FRA has already been issued. Presently, a SoC is under formulation and the case will be progressed as per DPP. One AEW&C aircraft has been inducted in Initial Operational Clearance (IOC) configuration. The DRDO is carrying out the development trials on the second AEW&C aircraft towards the Final Operational Clearance (FOC). The procurement case of the two additional AWACS is under consideration. Further, DRDO is planning development of two AWACS India on the Airbus A330 platform.

VAYU: *There are persistent rumours that HAL has suggested that the IAF order another batch of Sukhoi Su-30MKIs, as follow on to the 222 already contracted, the last of which are currently being manufactured at Nasik. Would these be considered as a "stop gap" to stem the erosion of fighter squadron numbers or*



The Tejas LCA (photo: HAL)