

Cover story

The Rafale – for all Reasons



Photo: IAF

The first five French-origin Dassault Rafale F3-R omni-role fighters were formally inducted into the Indian Air Force on 10 September 2020 at Air Force Station Ambala. The ceremony was attended by India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his French counterpart Florence Parly, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria and Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar (see lead news).

Some 14 years earlier, on 27 June 2006, Escadron de Chasse 1/7 Provence, at Saint-Dizier became the first French Air Force squadron to receive the Rafale, which 4.5 generation fighter, through constant upgradations, strives to reach “near fifth-generation” standard after progressive developments to robustly compete with emerging fifth-generation designs. Commentators have long felt that it is the French political reliability regarding Indo-French cooperation in the “nuclear arena”, including operationalisation of the



Photo: Dassault