

Indo-French Air Exercise

‘Desert Knight-21’



in the exercise included the Mirage 2000, Su-30MKI, Rafale, II-78 FRA, A.50 AWACS and AEW&C aircraft.

This exercise was part of a series of engagements between the two Air Forces, having held six editions of the *Garuda*, the last being in 2019 at French AF Base Mont-de-Marsan. “As measures to further the existing cooperation, the two forces have been gainfully utilising available opportunities to conduct hop-exercises.” The French deployment while ferrying to Australia for *Ex Pitchblack* in 2018 was hosted at Air Force Stations Agra and Gwalior for the exercise with fighters and MRTT aircraft. The French detachment for *Ex Desert Knight-21* was earlier deployed in Asia as part of their ‘Skyros Deployment’ and ferried to Air Force Station Jodhpur.

This exercise was also unique as it included fielding of Rafale aircraft by both AFs, which was “indicative of the growing interaction between the two premier Air Forces”.

The Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force (*Armée de l’Air et de l’Espace*) conducted their bilateral air exercise, *Ex Desert Knight-21* operating from Air Force Station Jodhpur 20 to 24 January 2021.

The French contingent comprised Rafales, Airbus A330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT), A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft and some 175 personnel. Indian Air Force aircraft types participating

