

VAYU Interview with

“Poised for Quantum Growth”

VAYU : Congratulations on your taking over as the 24th CNS, and the fourth Naval Aviator to do so. With your flying background and vast operational experience, would you kindly enumerate on priorities for the Navy's expansion and modernisation over the next few years, including its air arm.

CNS : Thank you. The Indian Navy's Air Arm is poised for a quantum growth over the next few years.

There is a comprehensive plan to augment the number and enhance the capability of ship-borne helicopters through midlife upgrades and role enhancement on the existing fleet of Kamov 28 and Sea King 42B. Procurement of eight Chetak and sixteen ALH helicopters to enhance Coastal Security has commenced. Further, we also have plans to procure additional multirole helicopters to meet ship-borne helicopter requirements.

To meet Deck Based Fighter requirements, a RFI for MRCBF (Multi Role Carrier Borne Fighter) has been hosted on the MoD website. The case is being progressed in accordance with DPP-16. Further, a case for MiG-29K midlife upgrade is being progressed. Delivery of four additional P-8Is will commence from April 2020 onwards. The Government has also accorded AON for 6 additional P-8Is.

We have added four new Dornier 228 aircraft ex HAL, four are scheduled to be inducted by end of this year. We



have also commissioned new Dornier Air Squadrons at Meenambakkam (Chennai) and Porbandar (Gujarat). At the same time, we are progressively upgrading our air infrastructure at Naval air bases across the country, as well as on the island territories.

In addition to Dornier aircraft, we are extensively utilising RPAs for coastal surveillance. Three RPA Squadrons have been commissioned at Kochi, Porbandar and Ramnad. Procurement of HALE RPAS as a joint tri-Service case is also on the cards.