

Urgent Procurement of 21 MiG 29s, 12 Su 30s following Border Tensions

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India is to fast track the purchase of an additional 21 MiG 29 fighter jets and 12 Sukhoi Su-30 MKI aircraft from Russia, a news report said Thursday. This comes amid spiraling tensions between India and China.

The new fighter jets will be bought in a government-to-government deal with Russia with the approximate cost estimated to be ₹6,000 crore.

Key Highlights

- The Indian Air Force had been planning to buy the additional aircraft for some time with Indian Air Force chief Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhaduria stating this at his annual press conference ahead of Indian Air Force day on 8 October. But now the proposal will be fast tracked, the ANI report said adding that the proposal is likely to come up before the defence ministry next week for final approval.
- The 12 Su-30MKI fighters will be produced by the government-run Bengaluru-based Hindustan Aeronautics Limited while 21 MiG 29 fighters will be manufactured in Russia.
- The proposal to buy fighter jets comes at a time when India and China are engaged in a tense standoff in the Galwan Valley, which started after Chinese troops intruded into Indian territory and objected to a road India was building near the Line of Actual Control, claiming that it laid within Chinese territory.
- The Sukhoi's form the backbone of the IAF and are due for an upgrade that is being negotiated separately with HAL. These 33 fighters would be the first jets to be ordered after the Rafale deal inked in 2017 and would add to the combat capabilities of the air force.

- In addition, the Air Force is also likely to place an order for 83 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft Mk 1A this year with HAL that is valued at over Rs 38,000 crore — the biggest ever Make in India project of its kind.

SOURCE: *Economic Times, Livemint*