

16 More JF-17 Aircraft Handed Over to PAF

Defense-aerospace



The Pakistani Air Force this week received 16 additional JF-17 Thunder fighters, jointly developed with China and locally manufactured. The JF-17 entered Pakistani service in 2007, and a total for of 150 are planned. (PAK AF photo)

Sixteen more JF-17 Thunder jets were inducted into the No. 14 Squadron of the Pakistan Air Force during a ceremony held at Pakistan Aeronautical Complex on Thursday.

Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif attended the ceremony as the chief guest while Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman was also present.

Addressing the gathering, the defence minister lauded PAF's services in safeguarding the Pakistan's airspace and said the fighter jets will add more power to the force.

Kh Asif said self-reliance through indigenization is the only means to bolster national defence. He said the Government was committed to fund the PAF's operational readiness especially its JF-17 programme in future as well.

The Defence Minister said Pakistan is a peace-loving country and wishes to maintain peaceful relations with international community especially with neighbours.

However, he said, at the same time, the government stands determined to safeguard Pakistan's national interests and borders against any aggression.

The Minister lauded the great role PAF has played in operation Zarb-e-Azb alongwith Pakistan army. This has not only brought peace and normalcy to the country, but also put Pakistan on a fast economic track.

Khawaja Asif thanked China for its support in co-production of JF-17 Thunder aircraft. He said this aircraft was not only an example of dedication of personnel but speaks volumes of our all-weather friendship with China. He said Pakistan values the support of Chinese brothers.

He said today PAF is one of the leading and most respected air forces across the globe. He said the PAF has proved equal to the job at toughest times. He said PAF would stand fast in facing any threat be it internal or external. He said PAF is fully capable to meet any challenges.

In his address, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman said JF-17 fighter jets have the capability comparable to any advanced fourth generation aircraft across the world.

Earlier, a ceremony to hand over sixteen JF-17 Thunder jets to 14-Squadron of Pakistan Air Force was held at Kamra Airbase. PAF already has over 70 JF-17 Thunder jets in its fleet. The new fighter jets were also displayed at the ceremony and were inspected by the defence minister.

The JF-17 Thunder, a single-engine multi-role fighter jet, and was jointly developed by China and Pakistan. Development on the aircraft started in 1999, and the maiden flight was conducted in 2003.

The new fighter jets were also displayed at the ceremony and were inspected by Asif. A total of 16 JF-17 Thunder aircraft have been manufactured jointly by China and Pakistan in the past year.

Pakistan Air Force has these fighter jets since 2007 followed by its upgraded models in 2013. The JF-17 Thunder is a single-engine multi-role jet development of which was started in 1999 by collaboration between Pakistan and China. Its first flight was conducted in year 2003.

This jet fighter is considered to be the major defensive mechanism of the Pakistan Air Force as it can be equipped with air-to-air ordnance.

PAC chairman Air Marshall Arshad Malik, earlier this month told Asian Military Review that the PAF will likely place an order for 50 Pakistan Aeronautical Complex/Chengdu Aerospace Corporation JF-17 Block-III fighter jets in the first half of 2017.

The PAF is slated to induct 150 JF-17 combat aircraft over the next years split into three production blocks: Block-I, Block II, and Block-III. PAC has so far produced 50 Block-I aircraft and over 20 out of a total order of 50 Block-II JF-17s.