

Dassault-Reliance Kicks Off Falcon Jet Production

Plan to build complete executive jet here by 2022; Make in India to give \$5m cost advantage

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Nagpur: At the heart of the controversy over offsets in the Rafale deal, the Dassault-Reliance facility in Nagpur has kick started production, with the delivery of major components for the Falcon 2000 LX executive jets that are currently being assembled in France.

Top executives who have been working at the plant that will meet some of the offset obligations for the €7.87-billion Rafale deal said the plan is to ramp up production over the next three years and deliver a complete Falcon 2000 LX jet by 2022.

However, they said no parts of the Rafale jets will be made at the facility for the time being but did not rule out the possibility of expanding it for the military aircraft in the future if India orders more than the 36.

"By early 2022, we want to assemble the complete Falcon 2000 aircraft here in Nagpur and we want to fly it out from here," Sampathkumaran ST, CEO of Dassault Reliance Aeronautics Ltd (DRAL), told ET. The plant will be capable of producing two aircraft per month once fully operational.

At present, the facility, which was

Jet Set Go...

FIRST COCKPIT FRONT
section of Falcon
2000 series produced

IT WILL BE DISPLAYED
at Aero India
Air show in
Bengaluru

**ONCE FULLY
OPERATIONAL**
co to employ
over 650 high
skill personnel



**DASSAULT TO
CLAIM** offset
credits from
the plant in
October this
year by officially
informing the
govt

NO PLANT TO MAKE
parts for Rafale
fighter jets here, will
be considered if
more orders come

showcased to the media for the first time, is assembling the cockpit and fuel tank parts for the popular executive jets. Internal calculations claim that the Make in India project can give a \$5 million cost advantage due to lower labour and production costs at Nagpur as compared to the current facility in France.

A Falcon 2000 LX sells for a little over \$35 million and the lower cost for the Made in India jets would give it an edge in the international market over competitors, officials believe. Once complete, this will be the first private sector assembly line that produces commercial jets in India and will employ over 650 high skilled personnel.

The ongoing work at the facility will count towards offsets obligations of Dassault for the Rafale deal with the French company committed to spend upwards of ₹850 crore to

set it up. Dassault officials however say that there are no plans to make components for the Rafale jet as part of the offsets obligations.

"Depending on further orders, we will decide on the question of making the Rafale jet here in India. As of today, only components for the Falcon aircraft are being planned here," Dassault's senior executive vice president Benoit Dussaugey said. The company is set to claim offset credits for the Rafale contract in October this year when it will inform the Indian government officially about the work being carried out.

Executives however refrained from comments on the political controversy surrounding the deal, saying it has not impacted any work at the plant. "It has no impact here, we are following our path and we don't want to talk about the politics around it," Benoit said.