

Pakistan in talks with Russia for buying MI-35 attack helicopters

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Islamabad: Pakistan is in negotiations with Russia for buying its MI-35 attack helicopters and a deal could be clinched within two months, Minister for Defence Production Rana Tanveer Hussain has said.

Rana Tanveer Hussain

"I hope we will be able to materialise this project (to buy MI-35 helicopters) in two months," he said while talking to reporters on Monday.

Pakistan and Russia had signed a deal regarding the sale of four MI-35 attack helicopters in August last year, which was the first major defence deal between the two Cold War-era adversaries.

Soviet Russia had banned the sale of military hardware to US-allied Pakistan after the Cold War period and the Afghan war in 1980s, but relations started improving after the two countries signed a bilateral defence cooperation agreement to strengthen military-to-military relations in November 2014.

Hussain also said that the JF-17 aircraft, jointly produced with the Chinese help, were capable enough to meet all defence requirements of the country.

Pakistan had a fleet of state-of-the-art JF-17 Thunder aircraft which carried all specifications of any advanced fighter jet, Hussain was quoted as saying by the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan (APP).

Pakistan was at top among the 10 countries having JF-17 fleet, he said, adding that the country's defence was impregnable and had the capability to meet all challenges.

The minister's statement about the importance of JF-17 aircraft came even as the US Congress recently refused to partially fund eight F-16 jets which US has agreed to sell to Pakistan.

JF-17 Thunder is a third-generation fighter co-produced by Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) and China's Chengdu Aircraft Industry Corporation.

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