

Russia delivers four Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets to China

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Beijing: Russia has finally delivered four planes in a batch of Russian Sukhoi-35 fighters to China.

Sukhoi jet

The delivery was made after a delay of two years as Moscow was apprehensive that its fifth generation fighter jet will lose value after Chinese military unveiled its J-20 stealth fighter, official media in Beijing reported.

The Su-35 is an advanced version of the Su-30s operated by the Indian Airforce. The delivery was made on December 25, a news portal of the People's Liberation Army reported.

Since the debut of China's stealth fighter J-20 fighter at Zhuhai Airshow, procurement of the Su-35 fighter jets has gone quite smoothly. Some say this is the outcome of the close relationship between China and Russia.

However, the latter did not change its stance on the export of the Su-35 until the J-20 fighter was unveiled, state-run People's Daily reported.

Russia believes that with the commissioning of the J-20, the Su-35 will soon lose its value in the Chinese market. That estimation is the reason for the smooth procurement, the report said.

China has been ramping up its military aviation wing with a number of new fighter jets including two versions of the stealth fighters as well as J-15 a fighter plane to operate from the deck of its first aircraft carrier, Liaoning which has begun live fire drills in the disputed South China Sea.

The construction of China's second indigenously built aircraft carrier is under construction in full swing, according to the official media reports.

"One can only be independent when he is self-reliant," the PLA Daily article said expressing hope that the Su-35 fighter jet is the last fighter imported by China.

While China made advances in manufacturing of new type of fighter jets, it is still dependent on Russia for engines as well as avionics.

Speculation was rife that Russia which had moved closer to China following hostilities with the Obama administration may move closer to the US once President-elect Donald Trump takes office as he shares better relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

- PTI inputs