

Meteor missiles

May 1, 2020

Context: France is considering a request for early delivery of Meteor air-to-air missiles to India

- Meteor missile has been developed by a group of European partners led by MBDA to meet the needs of six European nations: the UK, Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Sweden.
- The weapon system will equip Eurofighter Typhoon, Rafale and Gripen
- The beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile is considered to be the best in its class and can take out enemy aircraft at a range of much beyond 100 km
- Meteor offers a multi-shot capability against long range manoeuvring targets, jets, UAVs and cruise missiles in a heavy electronic countermeasures (ECM) environment with range well in excess of 150 kilometres
- Its no-escape zone of over 60 km is largest among air-to-air missiles
- A solid-fueled ramjet motor allows the missile to cruise at a speed of over Mach 4 and provides the missile with thrust and mid-way acceleration to target intercept
- A two-way datalink enables the launch aircraft to provide mid-course target updates or retargeting if required, including data from off-board third parties.

India

- **It will give India the firepower to take on US supplied AMRAAMs** used by the Pakistan Air Force to target its fighter jets the day after the Balakot airstrikes
- Rafale fighters were to be initially equipped with the Mica air-to-air missiles that are also operational on the Mirage 2000 fleet and supplemented later with the

Meteor missile

- Indian Rafale jets will also get the “game-changing” SCALP stand-off missiles that have a range of over 300 km and are designed to hit high value, strongly protected targets deep inside enemy territory. Rafale jets can carry two of the missiles, making them capable of hitting almost any target in Pakistan.
- This ‘stand-off ’ capability is becoming central to the Indian defence strategy, with the air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles being supplemented with the S-400 anti-air system being procured from Russia that will have the ability to take down airborne targets.