

and procurements thereof. In addition, financial power to ensure the availability and maintenance of minimum levels of critical ammunition has been delegated to the Army to meet any emergent requirement and to enable them to maintain military preparedness at all times.

**Agreement with France for supply of Rafale fighter jets**

163. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has made an agreement with France for supply of Rafale fighter jets;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the difference between original request for proposal issued in 2007 and present agreement; and

(d) what is the amount Government is spending for this deal?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An Inter-Governmental Agreement was signed on 23rd September, 2016 between the Government of India and French Republic for the procurement of 36 Rafale aircraft including weapons, long term maintenance support, simulators along with 10 years of annual maintenance and associated equipment.

(c) and (d) The Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) proposal was for procurement of 126 aircraft in which 18 aircraft were direct fly-away aircraft and 108 aircraft were to be License Manufactured in India. In the present procurement, 36 Rafale aircraft are being procured in direct fly-away condition under Inter-Governmental Agreement between the Government of India and French Republic. In the IGA, better terms have been achieved in terms of better pricing, better maintenance terms and better delivery schedule.

**Recruitment of female cadets in the Army, Navy and Air Force**

164. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of female cadets who have been recruited in the Army, Air Force and Navy during the last three years; and

(b) whether Government is taking any initiative to increase the participation of women in the defence services of the country and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. SUBHASH RAMRAO BHAMRE): (a) In the Army, Navy and Air Force women are recruited in the officer cadre only. The number of women officers in the Indian Army (excluding Medical, Dental and Nursing Branch), the Indian Air Force (excluding Medical and Dental Branch) and the Indian Navy recruited during the last three years, Service-wise, is as under:

Year	Army	Navy	Air Force
2014	104	57	155
2015	72	35	223
2016	69	43	108

(b) In 2011, the Government approved consideration of women Short Service Commission Officers (SSCOs) for grant of permanent commission along with men SSCOs in specific branches in the three services *viz.* Judge Advocate General (JAG), and Army Education Corps (AEC) of the Army and their corresponding branches in Navy and Air Force, Naval Constructor in Navy and Accounts Branch in Air Force.

In March, 2016, approval has been accorded for induction of women Short Service Commission (SSC) officers as Pilots in Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) stream and in the Naval Armament Inspectorate (NAI) cadre.

In the Indian Air Force since 1993, women officers have been inducted in all branches and stream as Short Service Commissioned Officers except in the fighter stream. However, IAF has revised Short Service Commission scheme to induct women into the fighter stream on experimental basis for five years. The first batch of three women officers was commissioned in the fighter stream in June 18, 2016.

In addition, steps like increasing tenure of women officers and improving promotional prospects in Army have been taken to increase participation of women in the Army.

#### **Private partner in joint venture of Rafale aircraft**

165. SHRI K.T.S. TULSI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the basis for making Reliance Defence Limited, a private company as a joint venture partner in the purchase of 36 Rafale aircrafts from France, excluding Government controlled Hindustan Aeronautics Limited; and