

LCA Tejas Mk 2 testing by 2017: DRDO chief

Given that the LCA Tejas' indigenous development program has been marred by delays, the most advanced among the variants, the Mk 2 (also Mk. II) version, will take years before it can be seen taking off the HAL airport for testing. The LCA Tejas Mk 2 will be available for testing by 2017 and will not be ready before 2024, INN reported, citing DRDO chief Dr S Christopher's statements to Vayu Aerospace and Defence Review. The DRDO chief, however, confirmed that the proposed LCA Tejas Mk 2 will be using the powerful General Electric F414-GE-INS6 engines and will feature a lengthier fuselage. But there was no clarification by him if this he was talking about the Air Force or the Navy variant of the MK 2 aircraft. IHS Jane's 360 had earlier reported, citing official sources, that the HAL had proposed the Indian Air Force (IAF) of acquiring LCA Tejas Mk 1A variant instead of waiting for LCA Tejas Mk 2 aircraft, as a stop gap arrangement. Currently, the IAF is on board to acquire LCA Tejas Mk 1A. The report noted the lack of clarity on the IAF's participation with LCA Tejas Mk 2, given the recent statement by Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha to the media: "As of now we are not interested in Mk 2." The Indian Navy has expressed its requirement for a naval variant of LCA Tejas Mk 2. The LCA Tejas Mk 2 version will also be featuring active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar from Israeli firm ELTA Systems.



LCA Tejas makes a smooth landing at Bengaluru on Dec. 20, 2013.DRDO