

INDIA NOW ENABLES LOW-COST PRODUCTION, HIGH OUTPUT: PM

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Onwards and upwards: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the foundation stone laying ceremony in Vadodara on Sunday. PTI/PTI

India maintained its growth momentum despite the pandemic, war, and supply-chain disruptions, and the country is presenting opportunities for low-cost manufacturing and high output, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday after laying the foundation stone for a C-295 transport aircraft manufacturing facility to be set up by a consortium of Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. (TASL) and Airbus Defence and Space in Vadodara.

The event comes just before the announcement of the Assembly election in Gujarat.

“In the coming years, the defence and aerospace sectors will be two important pillars for making India *aatmanirbhar* (self-reliant). We have a goal of exceeding \$25 billion in defence manufacturing by 2025. Besides, our defence exports would be more than \$5 billion,” Mr. Modi said.

In September 2021, the Defence Ministry signed a Rs. 21,935-crore deal with Airbus Defence and Space, Spain for the procurement of 56 C-295MW aircraft. This is the first project in which military aircraft will be manufactured in India by the private sector under technology transfer.

The Prime Minister termed the C-295 project a big step in the direction of making India the manufacturing hub of the world.

“India is moving forward with the mantra of ‘Make in India, Make for the Globe’. Today our policies are stable, predictable and futuristic,” Mr. Modi said.

N. Chandrasekaran, chairman of Tata Sons, said, “With the set-up of the final assembly line in Vadodara, the Tata Group will now be able to take aluminium ingots at one end of the value stream and turn it into an Airbus C295 aircraft for the Indian Air Force.”

Of the 56 aircraft, 16 will come in fly-away condition between September 2023 and August 2025. The first of 40 “Made in India” aircraft is expected in September 2026 and the project will be completed by 2031.

Guillaume Faury, chief executive officer of Airbus, said its teams were committed to supporting the IAF’s modernisation. The C-295 programme would contribute to the development of the private defence manufacturing sector.

The C-295 will replace the Avro transport aircraft of the IAF. The aircraft, which has achieved more than 5,00,000 flight hours in 34 countries, is used for tactical transport of up to 71 passengers or 50 paratroopers, and for logistic operations to locations inaccessible to heavier aircraft.

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